

THE
VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

A TALE.

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VOL. II.



ELOPEMENT OF OLIVIA.—P. 96.

THE
VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

CHAP. I.

THE HISTORY OF A PHILOSOPHIC VAGABOND, PURSUING
NOVELTY, BUT LOSING CONTENT.

AFTER we had supped, Mrs. Arnold politely offered to send a couple of her footmen for my son's baggage, which he at first seemed to decline; but upon her pressing the request, he was obliged to inform her, that a stick and a wallet were all the moveable things upon this earth which he could boast of. 'Why, aye, my son,' cried I, 'you left me but poor; and poor, I find, you are come back: and yet, I make no doubt, you have seen a great deal of the world.'—'Yes, Sir,' replied my son; 'but travelling after Fortune is not the way to secure her; and, indeed, of late, I have desisted from the pursuit.'—'I fancy, Sir,' cried Mrs. Arnold, 'that the account of your adventures would be amusing; the first part of them I have often heard from my niece; but could the company prevail for the rest, it would be an additional obligation.'—'Madam,' replied my son, 'I promise you the pleasure you have in hearing, will not be half so great as my vanity in repeating them; and yet in the whole narrative I can scarce promise you one adventure, as my account is

‘ rather of what I saw, than what I did. The first mis-
‘ fortune of my life, which you all know, was great;
‘ but though it distressed, it could not sink me. No
‘ person ever had a better knack at hoping than I.
‘ The less kind I found Fortune at one time, the more
‘ I expected from her another; and being now at the
‘ bottom of her wheel, every new revolution might
‘ lift, but could not depress me. I proceeded, there-
‘ fore, towards London in a fine morning, no way un-
‘ easy about to-morrow, but cheerful as the birds that
‘ carolled by the road; and comforted myself with re-
‘ flecting that London was the mart where abilities of
‘ every kind were sure of meeting distinction and re-
‘ ward.

‘ Upon my arrival in town, Sir, my first care was
‘ to deliver your letter of recommendation to our cou-
‘ sin, who was himself in little better circumstances
‘ than I. My first scheme, you know, Sir, was to be
‘ usher at an academy, and I asked his advice on the
‘ affair. Our cousin received the proposal with a true
‘ Sardonic grin. “Aye,” cried he, “this is, indeed,
“ a very pretty career that has been chalked out for
“ you. I have been an usher to a boarding-school my-
“ self: and may I die by an anodyne necklace, but I
“ had rather be an under-turnkey in Newgate! I
“ was up early and late: I was brow-beat by the master,
“ hated for my ugly face by the mistress, worried by
“ the boys within, and never permitted to stir out to
“ meet civility abroad. But are you sure you are fit
“ for a school? Let me examine you a little. Have
“ you been bred an apprentice to the business?” No.
“ Then you won’t do for a school. Can you dress the

“boys hair?” No. “Then you won’t do for a school.
“Have you had the small-pox?” No. “Then you
“won’t do for a school. Can you lie three in a bed?”
No. “Then you will never do for a school. Have you
“got a good stomach?” Yes. “Then you will by no
“means do for a school. No, Sir: if you are for a gen-
“teel, easy profession, bind yourself seven years as an
“apprentice to turn a cutler’s wheel; but avoid a school
“by any means. Yet come,” continued he, “I see
“you are a lad of spirit and some learning; what do
“you think of commencing author like me? You have
“read in books, no doubt, of men of genius starving at
“the trade; at present I’ll shew you forty very dull
“fellows about town that live by it in opulence. All
“honest jog-trot men, who go on smoothly and dully,
“and write history and politics, and are praised: men,
“Sir, who, had they been bred coblers, would all their
“lives have only mended shoes, but never made them.”

‘Finding that there was no degree of gentility af-
‘fixed to the character of an usher, I resolved to accept
‘his proposal; and having the highest respect for lite-
‘rature, hailed the antiqua mater of Grub-street with
‘reverence. I thought it my glory to pursue a track
‘which Dryden and Otway trod before me. I confi-
‘dered the goddess of this region as the parent of ex-
‘cellence; and, however an intercourse with the world
‘might give us good-sense, the poverty she granted I
‘supposed to be the nurse of genius! Big with these re-
‘flections, I sat down, and finding that the best things
‘remained to be said on the wrong side, I resolved to
‘write a book that should be wholly new. I therefore
‘dressed up three paradoxes with some ingenuity.

‘ They were false, indeed, but they were new. The
‘ jewels of truth have been so often imported by others,
‘ that nothing was left for me to import, but some splen-
‘ did things that at a distance looked every bit as well.
‘ Witness, you powers, what fancied importance fate
‘ perched upon my quill while I was writing! The whole
‘ learned world, I made no doubt, would rise to oppose
‘ my systems; but then I was prepared to oppose the
‘ whole learned world. Like the porcupine, I fate self-
‘ collected, with a quill pointed against every opposer.’

‘ Well said, my boy,’ cried I; ‘ and what subject did
‘ you treat upon? I hope you did not pass over the im-
‘ portance of monogamy. But I interrupt: go on. You
‘ published your paradoxes; well, and what did the
‘ learned world say to your paradoxes?’

‘ Sir,’ replied my son, ‘ the learned world said no-
‘ thing to my paradoxes; nothing at all, Sir. Every
‘ man of them was employed in praising his friends
‘ and himself; or condemning his enemies: and un-
‘ fortunately, as I had neither, I suffered the cruellest
‘ mortification—neglect.

‘ As I was meditating one day, in a coffee-house, on
‘ the fate of my paradoxes, a little man happening to
‘ enter the room, placed himself in the box before me;
‘ and after some preliminary discourse, finding me to be
‘ a scholar, drew out a bundle of proposals, begging
‘ me to subscribe to a new edition he was going to give
‘ the world of Propertius, with notes. This demand
‘ necessarily produced a reply, that I had no money;
‘ and that concession led him to enquire into the nature
‘ of my expectations. Finding that my expectations
‘ were just as great as my purse—“I see,” cried he,

" you are unacquainted with the town. I'll teach you
 " a part of it. Look at these proposals; upon these
 " very proposals I have subsisted very comfortably for
 " twelve years. The moment a nobleman returns from
 " his travels, a Creolian arrives from Jamaica, or a
 " dowager from her country-seat, I strike for a sub-
 " scription. I first besiege their hearts with flattery,
 " and then pour in my proposals at the breach. If they
 " subscribe readily the first time, I renew my request to
 " beg a dedication fee; if they let me have that, I smite
 " them once more for engraving their coat of arms at
 " the top. Thus," continued he, " I live by vanity,
 " and laugh at it. But, between ourselves, I am now
 " too well known; I should be glad to borrow your face
 " a bit: a nobleman of distinction has just returned
 " from Italy; my face is familiar to his porter; but if
 " you bring this copy of verses, my life for it you suc-
 " ceed, and we divide the spoil."

' Bless us, George,' cried I, 'and is this the employ-
 ' ment of poets now? Do men of their exalted talents
 ' thus stoop to beggary! Can they so far disgrace their
 ' calling, as to make a vile traffic of praise for bread?'

' O no, Sir,' returned he; 'a true poet can never be
 ' so base; for wherever there is genius there is pride.
 ' The creatures I now describe, are only beggars in
 ' rhyme. The real poet, as he braves every hardship
 ' for fame, so is he equally a coward to contempt;
 ' and none but those who are unworthy protection,
 ' condescend to solicit it.

' Having a mind too proud to stoop to such indig-
 ' nities, and yet a fortune too humble to hazard a se-
 ' cond attempt for fame, I was now obliged to take a

‘ middle course, and write for bread. But I was un-
‘ qualified for a profession where mere industry alone
‘ was to insure success. I could not suppress my lurking
‘ passion for applause; but usually consumed that
‘ time in efforts after excellence which takes up but
‘ little room, when it should have been more advantageously
‘ employed in the diffusive productions of
‘ fruitful mediocrity. My little piece would therefore
‘ come forth in the midst of periodical publications, unnoticed and unknown. The public were more importantly employed than to observe the easy simplicity of my style, or the harmony of my periods. Sheet after sheet was thrown off to oblivion. My essays were buried among the essays upon liberty, eastern tales, and cures for the bite of a mad dog; while Philautus, Philalethes, Philelutheros, and Philanthropos, all wrote better, because they wrote faster than I.

‘ Now, therefore, I began to associate with none but disappointed authors, like myself, who praised, deplored and despised each other. The satisfaction we found in every celebrated writer’s attempts, was inversely as their merits. I found that no genius in another could please me. My unfortunate paradoxes had entirely dried up the source of comfort. I could neither read nor write with satisfaction; for excellence in another was my aversion, and writing was my trade.

‘ In the midst of these gloomy reflections, as I was one day sitting on a bench in St. James’s-Park, a young gentleman of distinction, who had been my intimate acquaintance at the university, approached me. We saluted each other with some hesitation—he almost ashamed of being known to one who made so shabby

‘an appearance, and I afraid of a repulse. But my
‘suspensions soon vanished; for Ned Thornhill was at
‘the bottom a very good-natured fellow.’

‘What did you say, George?’ interrupted I. ‘Thorn-
‘hill! was not that his name? It can certainly be no
‘other than my landlord.’—‘Bless me,’ cried Mrs.
Arnold, ‘is Mr. Thornhill so near a neighbour of
‘yours? He has long been a friend in our family, and
‘we expect a visit from him shortly.’

‘My friend’s first care,’ continued my son, ‘was
‘to alter my appearance by a very fine suit of his own
‘clothes, and then I was admitted to his table upon the
‘footing of half friend, half underling. My business
‘was to attend him at auctions, to put him in spirits
‘when he sat for his picture, to take the left-hand in
‘his chariot when not filled by another, and to assist at
‘tattering a kip, as the phrase was, when he had a mind
‘for a frolic. Besides this, I had twenty other little
‘employments in the family. I was to do many small
‘things without bidding; to carry the cork-screw; to
‘stand godfather to all the butler’s children; to sing
‘when I was bid; to be never out of humour; always
‘to be humble; and, if I could, to be very happy.

‘In this honourable post, however, I was not with-
‘out a rival. A captain of marines, who was formed for
‘the place by nature, opposed me in my patron’s af-
‘fections. His mother had been laundress to a man of
‘quality, and thus he early acquired a taste for pimp-
‘ing and pedigree. As this gentleman made it the study
‘of his life to be acquainted with lords, though he was
‘dismissed from several for his stupidity; yet he found
‘many of them, who were as dull as himself, that per-

mitted his assiduities. As flattery was his trade, he practised it with the easiest address imaginable ; but it came awkward and stiff from me ; and as every day my patron's desire of flattery increased, so every hour, being better acquainted with his defects, I became more unwilling to give it. Thus I was once more fairly going to give up the field to the captain, when my friend found occasion for my assistance. This was nothing less than to fight a duel for him with a gentleman whose sister it was pretended he had used ill. I readily complied with his request ; and though I see you are displeased at my conduct, yet as it was a debt indispensibly due to friendship, I could not refuse. I undertook the affair, disarmed my antagonist, and soon after had the pleasure of finding that the lady was only a woman of the town, and the fellow her bully and a sharper. This piece of service was repaid with the warmest professions of gratitude ; but as my friend was to leave town in a few days, he knew no other method of serving me, but by recommending me to his uncle Sir William Thornhill, and another nobleman of great distinction, who enjoyed a post under the government. When he was gone, my first care was to carry his recommendatory letter to his uncle, a man whose character for every virtue was universal, yet just. I was received by his servants with the most hospitable smiles ; for the looks of the domestics ever transmit their master's benevolence. Being shewn into a grand apartment, where Sir William soon came to me, I delivered my message and letter, which he read, and after pausing some minutes — " Pray, Sir," cried he, " inform me what you have

“ done for my kinsman, to deserve this warm recommendation? But I suppose, Sir, I guess your merits; you have fought for him; and so you would expect a reward from me for being the instrument of his vices. I wish, sincerely wish, that my present refusal may be some punishment for your guilt; but still more, that it may be some inducement to your repentance.”

‘ The severity of this rebuke I bore patiently, because I knew it was just. My whole expectations now, therefore, lay in my letter to the great man. As the doors of the nobility are almost ever beset with beggars, all ready to thrust in some sly petition, I found it no easy matter to gain admittance. However, after bribing the servants with half my worldly fortune, I was at last shewn into a spacious apartment, my letter being previously sent up for his lordship’s inspection. During this anxious interval, I had full time to look round me. Every thing was grand and of happy contrivance; the paintings, the furniture, the gildings, petrified me with awe, and raised my idea of the owner. Ah, thought I to myself, how very great must the possessor of all these things be, who carries in his head the business of the state, and whose house displays half the wealth of the kingdom; sure his genius must be unfathomable! During these awful reflections, I heard a step come heavily forward. Ah, this is the great man himself! No, it was only a chamber-maid. Another foot was heard soon after. This must be he! No, it was only the great man’s valet de chambre. At last his lordship actually made his appearance. “Are you,” cried he, “the bearer of this here letter?” I answered with a bow. “I learn by

“ this,” continued he, “ as how that—” But just at that instant a servant delivered him a card; and without taking farther notice, he went out of the room, and left me to digest my own happiness at leisure. I saw no more of him, till told by a footman that his lordship was going to his coach at the door. Down I immediately followed, and joined my voice to that of three or four more, who came like me to petition for favours. His lordship, however, went too fast for us, and was gaining his chariot-door with large strides, when I hallooed out to know if I was to have any reply. He was by this time got in, and muttered an answer, half of which I only heard, the other half was lost in the rattling of his chariot-wheels. I stood for some time with my neck stretched out, in the posture of one that was listening to catch the glorious sounds, till, looking round me, I found myself alone at his lordship’s gate.

‘ My patience,’ continued my son, ‘ was now quite exhausted: stung with the thousand indignities I had met with, I was willing to cast myself away, and only wanted the gulph to receive me. I regarded myself as one of those vile things that nature designed should be thrown by into her lumber-room, there to perish in obscurity. I had still, however, half a guinea left, and of that I thought nature herself should not deprive me; but in order to be sure of this, I was resolved to go instantly and spend it while I had it, and then trust to occurrences for the rest. As I was going along with this resolution, it happened that Mr. Crispe’s office seemed invitingly open to give me a welcome reception. In this office Mr. Crispe kindly

‘ offers all his Majesty’s subjects a generous promise of
‘ 30*l.* a year, for which promise all they give in return is
‘ their liberty for life, and permission to let him trans-
‘ port them to America as slaves. I was happy at find-
‘ ing a place where I could lose my fears in despera-
‘ tion, and entered this cell, for it had the appearance
‘ of one, with the devotion of a monastic. Here I found
‘ a number of poor creatures all in circumstances like
‘ myself, expecting the arrival of Mr. Crispe, present-
‘ ing a true epitome of English impatience. Each un-
‘ tractable soul at variance with fortune, wreaked her
‘ injuries on their own hearts: but Mr. Crispe at last
‘ came down, and all our murmurs were hushed. He
‘ deigned to regard me with an air of peculiar appro-
‘ bation, and indeed he was the first man who for a
‘ month past talked to me with smiles. After a few
‘ questions, he found I was fit for every thing in the
‘ world. He paused a while upon the properest means
‘ of providing for me, and slapping his forehead, as if he
‘ had found it, assured me, that there was at that time
‘ an embassy talked of from the synod of Pennsylvania
‘ to the Chickasaw Indians, and that he would use his
‘ interest to get me made secretary. I knew in my own
‘ heart the fellow lied, and yet his promise gave me
‘ pleasure, there was something so magnificent in the
‘ the sound. I fairly, therefore, divided my half guinea,
‘ one half of which went to be added to his thirty thou-
‘ sand pounds, and with the other half I resolved to go
‘ to the next tavern, to be there more happy than he.

‘ As I was going out with that resolution, I was met
‘ at the door by the captain of a ship, with whom I had
‘ formerly some little acquaintance, and he agreed to

‘ be my companion over a bowl of punch. As I never
‘ chose to make a secret of my circumstances, he assured
‘ me that I was on the very point of ruin, in listening to
‘ the office-keeper’s promises; for that he only designed
‘ to sell me to the plantations. “But,” continued he,
‘ I fancy you might by a much shorter voyage be very
‘ easily put into a genteel way of bread. Take my ad-
‘ vice. My ship sails to-morrow for Amsterdam; what
‘ if you go in her as a passenger? The moment you
‘ land, all you have to do is to teach the Dutchmen
‘ English, and I’ll warrant you’ll get pupils and money
‘ enough. I suppose you understand English,” added
‘ he, “by this time, or the deuce is in it.” I confidently
‘ assured him of that; but expressed a doubt, whether
‘ the Dutch would be willing to learn English. He af-
‘ firmed with an oath that they were fond of it to dis-
‘ traction; and upon that affirmation I agreed with his
‘ proposal, and embarked the next day to teach the
‘ Dutch English in Holland. The wind was fair, our
‘ voyage short; and after having paid my passage with
‘ half my moveables, I found myself fallen as from the
‘ skies, a stranger in one of the principal streets of Am-
‘ sterdam. In this situation I was unwilling to let any
‘ time pass unemployed in teaching. I addressed my-
‘ self, therefore, to two or three of those I met whose
‘ appearance seemed most promising: but it was im-
‘ possible to make ourselves mutually understood. It
‘ was not till this very moment I recollected, that in or-
‘ der to teach Dutchmen English, it was necessary that
‘ they should first teach me Dutch. How I came to
‘ overlook so obvious an objection, is to me amazing;
‘ but certain it is, I overlooked it.

‘ This scheme thus blown up, I had some thoughts
‘ of fairly shipping back to England again; but drop-
‘ ping into company with an Irish student, who was
‘ returning from Louvain, our conversation turned up-
‘ on topics of literature (for, by the way, it may be
‘ observed, that I always forgot the meanness of my
‘ circumstances when I could converse upon such sub-
‘ jects;) from him I learned that there were not two
‘ men in his whole university who understood Greek.
‘ This amazed me. I instantly resolved to travel to
‘ Louvain, and there live by teaching Greek: and in
‘ this design I was heartened by my brother student,
‘ who threw out some hints that a fortune might be got
‘ by it.

‘ I set boldly forward the next morning. Every day
‘ lessened the burthen of my moveables, like Æsop and
‘ his basket of bread; for I paid them for my lodgings
‘ to the Dutch as I travelled on. When I came to Lou-
‘ vain, I was resolved not to go sneaking to the lower
‘ professors, but openly tendered my talents to the
‘ principal himself. I went, had admittance, and offer-
‘ ed him my service as a master of the Greek language,
‘ which I had been told was a desideratum in his uni-
‘ versity. The principal seemed at first to doubt of my
‘ abilities; but of these I offered to convince him, by
‘ turning a part of any Greek author he should fix upon
‘ into Latin. Finding me perfectly earnest in my
‘ proposal, he addressed me thus: “ You see me, young
“ man, I never learned Greek, and I don’t find that I
“ have ever missed it. I have had a doctor’s cap and
“ gown without Greek; I have ten thousand florins a
“ year without Greek; I eat heartily without Greek;

“ and, in short,” continued he, “ as I don’t know Greek, I do not believe there is any good in it.”

‘ I was now too far from home to think of returning; so I resolved to go forward. I had some knowledge of music, with a tolerable voice; I now turned what was once my amusement into a present means of subsistence. I passed among the harmless peasants in Flanders, and among such of the French as were poor enough to be very merry; for I ever found them sprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peasant’s house towards night-fall, I played one of my most merry tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging, but subsistence for the next day. I once or twice attempted to play for people of fashion, but they always thought my performance odious, and never rewarded me even with a trifle. This was to me the more extraordinary, as whenever I used in better days to play for company, when playing was my amusement, my music never failed to throw them into raptures, and the ladies especially; but as it was now my only means, it was received with contempt: a proof how ready the world is to under-rate those talents by which a man is supported.

‘ In this manner I proceeded to Paris, with no design but just to look about me, and then to go forward. The people of Paris are much fonder of strangers that have money than of those that have wit. As I could not boast much of either, I was no great favourite. After walking about the town four or five days, and seeing the outsidcs of the best houses, I was preparing to leave this retreat of venal hospitality; when passing through one of the principal streets, whom should I meet but

‘ our cousin, to whom you first recommended me! This
‘ meeting was very agreeable to me, and I believe not
‘ displeasing to him. He enquired into the nature of my
‘ journey to Paris, and informed me of his own business
‘ there, which was to collect pictures, medals, intaglios,
‘ and antiques of all kinds, for a gentleman in London,
‘ who had just stepped into taste and a large fortune. I was
‘ the more surprised at seeing our cousin pitched upon
‘ for this office, as he himself had often assured me he
‘ knew nothing of the matter. Upon asking how he had
‘ been taught the art of *connoissance* so very suddenly, he
‘ assured me that nothing was more easy. The whole
‘ secret consisted in a strict adherence to two rules; the
‘ one, always to observe, that the picture might have
‘ been better if the painter had taken more pains; and
‘ the other, to praise the works of Pietro Perugino.
“ But,” says he, “as I once taught you how to be an
“ author in London, I’ll now undertake to instruct you
“ in the art of picture-buying in Paris.”

‘ With this proposal I very readily closed, as it was
‘ living; and now all my ambition was to live. I went
‘ therefore to his lodgings, improving my dress by his
‘ assistance; and after some time, accompanied him to
‘ auctions of pictures, where the English gentry were
‘ expected to be purchasers. I was not a little surprised
‘ at his intimacy with people of the best fashion, who
‘ referred themselves to his judgement upon every pic-
‘ ture or medal, as an unerring standard of taste. He
‘ made very good use of my assistance upon these occa-
‘ sions; for when asked his opinion, he would gravely
‘ take me aside and ask mine, shrug, look wise, return,
‘ and assure the company, that he could give no opinion

‘ upon an affair of so much importance. Yet there was
‘ sometimes an occasion for a more supported assurance.
‘ I remember to have seen him, after giving his opinion
‘ that the colouring of a picture was not mellow enough,
‘ very deliberately take a brush with brown varnish that
‘ was accidentally lying by, and rub it over the piece
‘ with great composure before all the company, and
‘ then ask if he had not improved the tints.

‘ When he had finished his commission in Paris, he
‘ left me strongly recommended to several men of distinction, as a person very proper for a travelling tutor;
‘ and after some time, I was employed in that capacity
‘ by a gentleman who brought his ward to Paris, in order to set him forward on his tour through Europe. I
‘ was to be the young gentleman’s governor, but with a
‘ promise that he should always govern himself. My
‘ pupil in fact understood the art of guiding in money
‘ concerns much better than I. He was heir to a fortune of about two hundred thousand pounds, left him
‘ by an uncle in the West Indies; and his guardians, to
‘ qualify him for the management of it, had bound him
‘ apprentice to an attorney. Thus avarice was his prevailing passion: all his questions on the road were, how
‘ much money might be saved; which was the least expensive course of travel; whether any thing could be
‘ bought that would turn to account when disposed of
‘ again in London. Such curiosities on the way as could
‘ be seen for nothing, he was ready enough to look at;
‘ but if the sight of them was to be paid for, he usually
‘ asserted, that he had been told they were not worth
‘ seeing. He never paid a bill that he would not ob-
‘ serve, how amazingly expensive travelling was! and

all this though he was not yet twenty-one. When arrived at Leghorn, as we took a walk to look at the port and shipping, he enquired the expence of the passage by sea home to England. This he was informed was but a trifle, compared to his returning by land; he was therefore unable to withstand the temptation; so paying me the small part of my salary that was due, he took leave, and embarked with only one attendant for London.

I now therefore was left once more upon the world at large; but then it was a thing I was used to. However, my skill in music could avail me nothing in a country where every peasant was a better musician than I; but by this time I had acquired another talent which answered my purpose as well, and this was a skill in disputation: In all the foreign universities and convents there are, upon certain days, philosophical thesis maintained against every adventitious disputant; for which, if the champion opposes with any dexterity, he can claim a gratuity in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night. In this manner, therefore, I fought my way towards England; walked along from city to city; examined mankind more nearly; and, if I may so express it, saw both sides of the picture. My remarks, however, are but few: I found that monarchy was the best government for the poor to live in, and common-wealths for the rich. I found that riches in general were in every country another name for freedom; and that no man is so fond of liberty himself, as not to be desirous of subjecting the will of some individuals in society to his own.

‘ Upon my arrival in England, I resolved to pay my
 ‘ respects first to you, and then to enlist as a volunteer in
 ‘ the first expedition that was going forward ; but on my
 ‘ journey down, my resolutions were changed by meet-
 ‘ ing an old acquaintance, who I found belonged to a
 ‘ company of comedians that were going to make a
 ‘ summer campaign in the country. The company
 ‘ seemed not much to disapprove of me for an associate.
 ‘ They all, however, apprized me of the importance of
 ‘ the task at which I aimed ; that the public was a many-
 ‘ headed monster, and that only such as had very good
 ‘ heads could please it : that acting was not to be learnt
 ‘ in a day ; and that without some traditional shrugs,
 ‘ which had been on the stage, and only on the stage,
 ‘ these hundred years, I could never pretend to please.
 ‘ The next difficulty was in fitting me with parts, as al-
 ‘ most every character was in keeping. I was driven for
 ‘ some time from one character to another, till at last
 ‘ Horatio was fixed upon, which the presence of the pre-
 ‘ sent company has happily hindered me from acting.’

CHAP. II.

THE SHORT CONTINUANCE OF FRIENDSHIP AMONGST THE
 VICIOUS, WHICH IS COEVAL ONLY WITH
 MUTUAL SATISFACTION.

MY son's account was too long to be delivered at
 once ; the first part of it was begun that night, and
 he was concluding the rest after dinner the next day,
 when the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at
 the door seemed to make a pause in the general satis-
 faction. The butler, who was now become my friend

in the family, informed me with a whisper, that the squire had already made some overtures to Miss Wilmot, and that her aunt and uncle seemed highly to approve the match. Upon Mr. Thornhill's entering, he seemed, at seeing my son and me, to start back; but I readily imputed that to surprise, and not displeasure. However, upon our advancing to salute him, he returned our greeting with the most apparent candour; and after a short time, his presence seemed only to increase the general good-humour.

After tea he called me aside, to enquire after my daughter; but upon my informing him that my enquiry was unsuccessful, he seemed greatly surprised; adding, that he had been since frequently at my house, in order to comfort the rest of the family, whom he left perfectly well. He then asked if I had communicated her misfortune to Miss Wilmot, or my son: and upon my replying, that I had not told them as yet, he greatly approved my prudence and precaution, desiring me by all means to keep it a secret: 'For at best,' cried he, 'it is 'but divulging one's own infamy; and perhaps Miss 'Livy may not be so guilty as we all imagine.' We were here interrupted by a servant, who came to ask the squire in to stand up at country-dances; so that he left me quite pleased with the interest he seemed to take in my concerns. His addresses, however, to Miss Wilmot, were too obvious to be mistaken; and yet she seemed not perfectly pleased, but bore them rather in compliance to the will of her aunt, than from real inclination. I had even the satisfaction to see her lavish some kind looks upon my unfortunate son, which the other could neither extort by his fortune nor assiduity. Mr.

Thornhill's seeming composure, however, not a little surprised me: we had now continued here a week, at the pressing instances of Mr. Arnold; but each day the more tendernefs Miss Wilmot shewed my son, Mr. Thornhill's friendship seemed proportionably to increase for him.

He had formerly made us the most kind assurances of using his interest to serve the family; but now his generosity was not confined to promises alone. The morning I designed for my departure, Mr. Thornhill came to me with looks of real pleasure, to inform me of a piece of service he had done for his friend George. This was nothing less than his having procured him an ensign's commission in one of the regiments that was going to the West Indies, for which he had promised but one hundred pounds, his interest being sufficient to get an abatement of the other two: 'As for this trifling piece of service,' continued the young gentleman, 'I desire no other reward but the pleasure of having served my friend; and as for the hundred pounds to be paid, if you are unable to raise it yourselves, I will advance it, and you shall repay me at your leisure.' This was a favour we wanted words to express our sense of. I readily, therefore, gave my bond for the money, and testified as much gratitude as if I never intended to pay.

George was to depart for town the next day to secure his commission, in pursuance of his generous patron's directions, who judged it highly expedient to use dispatch, lest in the mean time another should step in with more advantageous proposals. The next morning, therefore, our young soldier was early prepared for his departure, and seemed the only person among us that was not affected by it. Neither the fatigues and dan-

gers he was going to encounter, nor the friends and mistress, for Miss Wilmot actually loved him, he was leaving behind, any way damped his spirits. After he had taken leave of the rest of the company, I gave him all that I had, my blessing: 'And now, my boy,' cried I, 'thou art going to fight for thy country, remember ' how thy brave grand-father fought for his sacred ' king, when loyalty among Britons was a virtue. Go, ' my boy, and imitate him in all but his misfortunes; ' if it was a misfortune to die with Lord Falkland. Go, ' my boy, and if you fall, though distant, exposed and ' unwept by those that love you, the most precious ' tears are those with which Heaven bedews the un- ' buried head of a soldier.'

The next morning I took leave of the good family, that had been kind enough to entertain me so long, not without several expressions of gratitude to Mr. Thornhill for his late bounty. I left them in the enjoyment of all that happiness which affluence and good-breeding procure, and returned towards home, despairing of ever finding my daughter more, but sending a sigh to Heaven to spare and forgive her. I was now come within about twenty miles of home, having hired a horse to carry me, as I was yet but weak, and comforted myself with the hopes of soon seeing all I held dearest upon earth. But the night coming on, I put up at a little public-house by the road-side, and asked for the landlord's company over a pint of wine. We sat beside his kitchen fire, which was the best room in the house, and chatted on politics and the news of the country. We happened among other topics, to talk of young squire Thornhill, who, the host assured me, was hated

as much as his uncle, Sir William, who sometimes came down to the country, was loved. He went on to observe, that he made it his whole study to betray the daughters of such as received him to their houses, and after a fortnight or three weeks possession, turned them out unrewarded and abandoned to the world. As we continued our discourse in this manner, his wife, who had been out to get change, returned, and perceiving that her husband was enjoying a pleasure in which she was not a sharer, she asked him, in an angry tone, what he did there? to which he only replied in an ironical way, by drinking her health. ‘Mr. Symonds,’ cried she, ‘you use me very ill, and I’ll bear it no longer. Here ‘three parts of the business is left for me to do, and the ‘fourth left unfinished, while you do nothing but soak ‘with the guests all day long; whereas, if a spoonful of ‘liquor were to cure me of a fever, I never touch a ‘drop.’ I now found what she would be at, and immediately poured out a glass, which she received with a curtsy, and drinking towards my good health, ‘Sir,’ resumed she, ‘it is not so much for the value of ‘the liquor I am angry, but one cannot help it when ‘the house is going out of the windows. If the customers or guests are to be dunned, all the burden lies ‘upon my back; he’d as lief eat that glass as budge ‘after them himself. There, now above stairs, we have ‘a young woman who has come to take up her lodgings here, and I don’t believe she has got any money, ‘by her over civility. I am certain she is very slow of ‘payment, and I wish she were put in mind of it.’— ‘What signifies minding her,’ cried the host; ‘if she ‘be slow, she is sure.’—‘I don’t know that,’ replied





Def. & Engr. by T. Bewick.

the wife; 'but I know that I am sure she has been here a fortnight, and we have not yet seen the cross of her money.'—'I suppose, my dear,' cried he, 'we shall have it all in a lump.'—'In a lump,' cried the other, 'I hope we may get it any way; and that I am resolved we will this very night, or out she tramps, bag and baggage.'—'Consider, my dear,' cried the husband, 'she is a gentlewoman, and deserves more respect.'—'As for the matter of that,' returned the hostess, 'gentle or simple, out she shall pack with a fassarara. Gentry may be good things where they take; but for my part I never saw much good of them at the sign of the Harrow.' Thus saying, she ran up a narrow flight of stairs that went from the kitchen to a room over head, and I soon perceived by the loudness of her voice, and the bitterness of her reproaches, that no money was to be had from her lodger. I could hear the remonstrances very distinctly: 'Out, I say; pack out this moment! tramp, thou infamous scoundrel, or I'll give thee a mark thou won't be the better for these three months. What! you trumpery, to come and take up an honest house, without cross or coin to bless yourself with; come along, I say.'—'O dear Madam,' cried the stranger, 'pity me, pity a poor abandoned creature, for one night, and death will soon do the rest.' I instantly knew the voice of my poor ruined child, Olivia. I flew to her rescue, while the woman was dragging her along by the hair, and I caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms.—'Welcome, any way welcome, my dearest lost one, my treasure, to your poor old father's bosom. Though the vicious forsake thee, there is yet one in the world that will never forsake thee; though thou hast ten

‘ thousand crimes to answer for, he will forget them all.’—‘ O my own dear,’—for minutes she could say no more,—‘ my own dearest good papa! Could angels be kinder! How do I deserve so much? The villain, I hate him and myself, to be a reproach to so much goodness. You can’t forgive me; I know you cannot.’—‘ Yes, my child, from my heart I do forgive thee: Only repent, and we both shall yet be happy. We shall see many pleasant days yet, my Olivia.’ ‘ Ah! never, Sir, never. The rest of my wretched life must be infamy abroad, and shame at home. But, alas! papa, you look much paler than you used to do. Could such a thing as I am, give you so much uneasiness? Sure you have too much wisdom to take the miseries of my guilt upon yourself.’—‘ Our wisdom, young woman,’ replied I. ‘ Ah, why so cold a name, papa?’ cried she. ‘ This is the first time you ever called me by so cold a name.’—‘ I ask pardon, my darling,’ returned I; ‘ but I was going to observe, that wisdom makes but a slow defence against trouble, though at last a sure one.’

The landlady now returned, to know if we did not chuse a more genteel apartment; to which assenting, we were shewn to a room where we could converse more freely. After we had talked ourselves into some degree of tranquillity, I could not avoid desiring some account of the gradations that led to her present wretched situation. ‘ That villain, Sir,’ said she, ‘ from the first day of our meeting, made me honourable, though private proposals.’

‘ Villain indeed,’ cried I; ‘ and yet it in some measure surprises me, how a person of Mr. Burchell’s good sense and seeming honour could be guilty of

‘such deliberate baseness, and thus step into a family to undo it.’

‘My dear papa,’ returned my daughter, ‘you labour under a strange mistake. Mr. Burchell never attempted to deceive me. Instead of that, he took every opportunity of privately admonishing me against the artifices of Mr. Thornhill, who, I now find, was even worse than he represented him.’—‘Mr. Thornhill!’ interrupted I, ‘can it be?’—‘Yes, Sir,’ returned she, ‘it was Mr. Thornhill who seduced me, who employed the two ladies, as he called them, but who in fact were abandoned women of the town, without breeding or pity, to decoy us up to London. Their artifices, you may remember, would have certainly succeeded, but for Mr. Burchell’s letter, who directed those reproaches at them, which we all applied to ourselves. How he came to have so much influence as to defeat their intentions, still remains a secret to me; but I am convinced he was ever our warmest, sincerest friend.’

‘You amaze me, my dear,’ cried I; ‘but now I find my first suspicions of Mr. Thornhill’s baseness were too well grounded: but he can triumph in security; for he is rich, and we are poor. But tell me, my child; sure it was no small temptation that could thus obliterate all the impressions of such an education, and so virtuous a disposition as thine?’

‘Indeed, Sir,’ replied she, ‘he owes all his triumph to the desire I had of making him, and not myself, happy. I knew that the ceremony of our marriage, which was privately performed by a popish priest, was no way binding, and that I had nothing to trust

‘to but his honour.’—‘What,’ interrupted I, ‘and were you indeed married by a priest in orders?’—‘Indeed, Sir, we were,’ replied she, ‘though we were both sworn to conceal his name.’—‘Why then, my child, come to my arms again; and now you are a thousand times more welcome than before; for you are his wife to all intents and purposes; nor can all the laws of man, though written upon tablets of adamant, lessen the force of that sacred connection.’

‘Alas, papa,’ replied she, ‘you are but little acquainted with his villanies: he has been married already, by the same priest, to six or eight wives more, whom, like me, he has deceived and abandoned.’

‘Has he so!’ cried I, ‘then we must hang the priest, and you shall inform against him to-morrow.’—‘But, Sir,’ returned she, ‘will that be right, when I am sworn to secrecy!’—‘My dear,’ I replied, ‘if you have made such a promise, I cannot, nor will I tempt you to break it. Even though it may benefit the public, you must not inform against him. In all human institutions, a smaller evil is allowed to procure a greater good; as, in politics, a province may be given away to secure a kingdom; in medicine, a limb may be lopt off, to preserve the body. But in religion, the law is written, and inflexibly, *never* to do evil. And this law, my child, is right; for otherwise, if we commit a smaller evil to procure a greater good, certain guilt would be thus incurred, in expectation of contingent advantage. And though the advantage should certainly follow, yet the interval between commission and advantage, which is allowed to be guilty, may be that in which we are called away to

‘ answer for the things we have done, and the volume
‘ of human actions is closed for ever. But I interrupt
‘ you, my dear; go on.’

‘ The very next morning,’ continued she, ‘ I found
‘ what little expectation I was to have from his sincerity.
‘ That very morning he introduced me to two unhappy
‘ women more, whom, like me, he had deceived, but
‘ who lived in contented prostitution. I loved him too
‘ tenderly to bear such rivals in his affections, and strove
‘ to forget my infamy in a tumult of pleasures. With this
‘ view, I danced, dressed, and talked; but still was un-
‘ happy. The gentlemen who visited there told me
‘ every moment of the power of my charms, and this
‘ only contributed to increase my melancholy, as I had
‘ thrown all their power quite away. Thus each day I
‘ grew more pensive, and he more insolent, till at last the
‘ monster had the assurance to offer me to a young ba-
‘ ronet of his acquaintance. Need I describe, Sir, how
‘ his ingratitude stung me. My answer to this proposal
‘ was almost madness. I desired to part. As I was go-
‘ ing, he offered me a purse; but I flung it at him with
‘ indignation, and burst from him in a rage that for a
‘ while kept me insensible of the miseries of my situa-
‘ tion. But I soon looked round me, and saw myself a
‘ vile, abject, guilty thing, without one friend in the
‘ world to apply to. Just in that interval, a stage-coach
‘ happening to pass by, I took a place, it being my only
‘ aim to be driven at a distance from a wretch I despised
‘ and detested. I was set down here; where, since my
‘ arrival, my own anxiety, and this woman’s unkind-
‘ ness, have been my only companions. The hours of
‘ pleasure that I have passed with my mamma and sister
‘ now grow painful to me. Their sorrows are much;

‘but mine are greater than their’s; for mine are mixed with guilt and infamy.’

‘Have patience, my child;’ cried I, ‘and I hope things will yet be better. Take some repose to-night, and to-morrow I’ll carry you home to your mother and the rest of the family, from whom you will receive a kind reception. Poor woman! this has gone to her heart: but she loves you still, Olivia, and will forget it.’

CHAP. III.

OFFENCES ARE EASILY PARDONED WHERE
THERE IS LOVE AT BOTTOM.

THE next morning I took my daughter behind me, and set out on my return home. As we travelled along, I strove, by every persuasion, to calm her sorrows and fears, and to arm her with resolution to bear the presence of her offended mother. I took every opportunity, from the prospect of a fine country, through which we passed, to observe how much kinder Heaven was to us, than we to each other; and that the misfortunes of nature’s making, were but very few. I assured her, that she should never perceive any change in my affections, and that during my life, which yet might be long, she might depend upon a guardian and an instructor. I armed her against the censure of the world, shewed her that books were sweet unrepublishing companions to the miserable, and that if they could not bring us to enjoy life, they would at least teach us to endure it.

The hired horse that we rode was to be put up that night at an inn by the way, within about five miles

from my house; and as I was willing to prepare my family for my daughter's reception, I determined to leave her that night at the inn, and to return for her, accompanied by my daughter Sophia, early the next morning. It was night before we reached our appointed stage: however, after seeing her provided with a decent apartment, and having ordered the hostess to prepare proper refreshments, I kissed her, and proceeded towards home. And now my heart caught new sensations of pleasure, the nearer I approached that peaceful mansion. As a bird that had been frightened from its nest, my affections out-went my haste, and hovered round my little fire-side with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to say, and anticipated the welcome I was to receive. I already felt my wife's tender embrace, and smiled at the joy of my little ones. As I walked but slowly, the night waned apace. The labourers of the day were all retired to rest; the lights were out in every cottage; no sounds were heard but of the shrilling cock, and the deep-mouthed watch-dog, at hollow distance. I approached my abode of pleasure, and before I was within a furlong of the place, our honest mastiff came running to welcome me.

It was now near midnight that I came to knock at my door: all was still and silent; my heart dilated with unutterable happiness; when, to my amazement, I saw the house bursting out in a blaze of fire, and every aperture red with conflagration! I gave a loud convulsive out-cry, and fell upon the pavement insensible. This alarmed my son, who had till this been asleep, and he perceiving the flames, instantly waked my wife and

daughter, and all running out, naked, and wild with apprehension, recalled me to life with their anguish. But it was only to objects of new terror; for the flame had by this time caught the roof of our dwelling, part after part continuing to fall in, while the family stood with silent agony, looking on, as if they enjoyed the blaze. I gazed upon them and upon it by turns, and then looked round me for my two little ones; but they were not to be seen. 'O misery! Where,' cried I, 'where are my little ones?'—'They are burnt to death in the flames,' said my wife calmly, 'and I will die with them.'—That moment I heard the cry of the babes within, who were just awaked by the fire, and nothing could have stopped me. 'Where, where are my children?' cried I, rushing through the flames, and bursting the door of the chamber in which they were confined, 'Where are my little ones?'—'Here, dear papa; here we are!' cried they together, while the flames were just catching the bed where they lay. I caught them both in my arms, and snatched them through the fire as fast as possible, while, just as I was going out, the roof sunk in. 'Now,' cried I, holding up my children, 'now let the flames burn on, and all my possessions perish. Here they are, I have saved my treasure. Here, my dearest, here are our treasures, and we shall yet be happy.' We kissed our little darlings a thousand times; they clasped us round the neck, and seemed to share our transports, while their mother laughed and wept by turns.

I now stood a calm spectator of the flames, and after some time began to perceive that my arm to the shoulder was scorched in a terrible manner. It was there-

fore out of my power to give my son any assistance, either in attempting to save our goods, or preventing the flames spreading to our corn. By this time the neighbours were alarmed, and came running to our assistance; but all they could do was to stand, like us, spectators of the calamity. My goods, among which were the notes I had reserved for my daughters fortunes, were entirely consumed, except a box with some papers that stood in the kitchen, and two or three things more of little consequence, which my son brought away in the beginning. The neighbours contributed, however, what they could to lighten our distress. They brought us clothes, and furnished one of our out-houses with kitchen-utenfils; so that by day-light we had another, though a wretched dwelling, to retire to. My honest next neighbour, and his children, were not the least assiduous in providing us with every thing necessary, and offering whatever consolation untutored benevolence could suggest.

When the fears of my family had subsided, curiosity to know the cause of my long stay began to take place; having therefore informed them of every particular, I proceeded to prepare them for the reception of our lost one; and though we had nothing but wretchedness now to impart, I was willing to procure her a welcome to what we had. This task would have been more difficult but for our recent calamity, which had humbled my wife's pride, and blunted it by more poignant afflictions. Being unable to go for my poor child myself, as my arm grew very painful, I sent my son and daughter, who soon returned, supporting the wretched delinquent, who had not the courage to look up at her

mother; whom no instructions of mine could persuade to a perfect reconciliation; for women have a much stronger sense of female error than men. ‘Ah! madam,’ cried her mother, ‘this is but a poor place you are come to after so much finery. My daughter Sophy and I can afford but little entertainment to persons who have kept company only with people of distinction. Yes, Miss Livy, your poor father and I have suffered very much of late; but I hope Heaven will forgive you.’ During this reception, the unhappy victim stood pale and trembling, unable to weep or to reply; but I could not continue a silent spectator of her distress; wherefore assuming a degree of severity in my voice and manner, which was ever followed with instant submission, ‘I entreat, woman, that my words may be now marked once for all: I have here brought you back a poor deluded wanderer; her return to duty demands the revival of our tenderness. The real hardships of life are now coming fast upon us, let us not therefore increase them by dissention among each other. If we live harmoniously together, we may yet be contented, as there are enough of us to shut out the censuring world, and keep each other in countenance. The kindness of Heaven is promised to the penitent, and let ours be directed by the example. Heaven, we are assured, is much more pleased to view a repentant sinner, than ninety-nine persons who have supported a course of undeviating rectitude. And this is right; for that single effort by which we stop short in the down-hill path to perdition, is itself a greater exertion of virtue, than an hundred acts of justice.’

CHAP. IV.

NONE BUT THE GUILTY CAN BE LONG AND
COMPLETELY MISERABLE.

SOME assiduity was now required to make our present abode as convenient as possible, and we were soon again qualified to enjoy our former serenity. Being disabled myself from assisting my son in our usual occupations, I read to my family from the few books that were saved, and particularly from such as, by amusing the imagination, contributed to ease the heart. Our good neighbours, too, came every day with the kindest condolence, and fixed a time in which they were all to assist in repairing my former dwelling. Honest farmer Williams was not last among these visitors; but heartily offered his friendship. He would even have renewed his addresses to my daughter; but she rejected them in such a manner as totally repress his future solicitations. Her grief seemed formed for continuing, and she was the only person of our little society that a week did not restore to cheerfulness. She now lost that unblushing innocence which once taught her to respect herself, and to seek pleasure by pleasing. Anxiety had now taken strong possession of her mind; her beauty began to be impaired with her constitution, and neglect still more contributed to diminish it. Every tender epithet bestowed on her sister, brought a pang to her heart and a tear to her eye; and as one vice, though cured, ever plants others where it has been, so her former guilt, though driven out by repentance, left jealousy and envy behind. I strove a thousand ways to lessen her care,

and even forgot my own pain in a concern for her's, collecting such amusing passages of history, as a strong memory and some reading could suggest. 'Our happiness, my dear,' I would say, 'is in the power of One who can bring it about a thousand unforeseen ways, that mock our foresight. If example be necessary to prove this, I'll give you a story, my child, told us by a grave, though sometimes a romancing historian.

'Matilda was married very young to a Neapolitan nobleman of the first quality, and found herself a widow and a mother at the age of fifteen. As she stood one day caressing her infant son in the open window of an apartment, which hung over the river Volturna, the child, with a sudden spring, leaped from her arms into the flood below, and disappeared in a moment. The mother, struck with instant surprise, and making an effort to save him, plunged in after; but far from being able to assist the infant, she herself with great difficulty escaped to the opposite shore, just when some French soldiers were plundering the country on that side, who immediately made her their prisoner.

'As the war was then carried on between the French and the Italians with the utmost inhumanity, they were going at once to perpetrate those two extremes suggested by appetite and cruelty. This base resolution, however, was opposed by a young officer, who, though his retreat required the utmost expedition, placed her behind him, and brought her in safety to his native city. Her beauty at first caught his eye; her merit, soon after, his heart. They were married; he rose to the highest posts; they lived long together, and were happy. But the felicity of a soldier can

‘ never be called permanent: after an interval of several years, the troops which he commanded having met with a repulse, he was obliged to take shelter in the city where he had lived with his wife. Here they suffered a siege, and the city at length was taken. Few histories can produce more various instances of cruelty, than those which the French and Italians at that time exercised upon each other. It was resolved by the victors, upon this occasion, to put all the French prisoners to death; but particularly the husband of the unfortunate Matilda, as he was principally instrumental in protracting the siege. Their determinations were, in general, executed almost as soon as resolved upon. The captive soldier was led forth, and the executioner with his sword, stood ready, while the spectators in gloomy silence awaited the fatal blow, which was only suspended till the general, who presided as judge, should give the signal. It was in this interval of anguish and expectation, that Matilda came to take the last farewell of her husband and deliverer, deploring her wretched situation, and the cruelty of fate, that had saved her from perishing by a premature death in the river Volturna, to be the spectator of still greater calamities. The general, who was a young man, was struck with surprise at her beauty, and pity at her distress; but with still stronger emotions when he heard her mention her former dangers. He was her son, the infant for whom she had encountered so much danger; acknowledged her at once as his mother, and fell at her feet. The rest may be easily supposed: the captive was set free, and all the happiness that

‘ love, friendship, and duty, could confer on earth,
‘ were united.’

In this manner I would attempt to amuse my daughter; but she listened with divided attention; for her own misfortunes engrossed all the pity she once had for those of another, and nothing gave her ease. In company she dreaded contempt; and in solitude she only found anxiety. Such was the colour of her wretchedness, when we received certain information that Mr. Thornhill was going to be married to Miss Wilmot, for whom I always suspected he had a real passion, though he took every opportunity before me to express his contempt both of her person and fortune. This news served only to increase poor Olivia’s affliction; for such a flagrant breach of fidelity was more than her courage could support. I was resolved, however, to get more certain information, and to defeat, if possible, the completion of his designs, by sending my son to old Wilmot’s, with instructions to know the truth of the report, and to deliver Miss Wilmot a letter, intimating Mr. Thornhill’s conduct in my family. My son went, in pursuance of my directions, and in three days returned, assuring us of the truth of the account; but that he had found it impossible to deliver the letter, which he was therefore obliged to leave, as Mr. Thornhill and Miss Wilmot were visiting round the country. They were to be married, he said, in a few days, having appeared together at church the Sunday before he was there, in great splendour, the bride attended by six young ladies, and he by as many gentlemen. Their approaching nuptials filled the whole country with rejoicing, and they usually rode out together in the

grandest equipage that had been in the country for many years. All the friends of both families, he said, were there, particularly the squire's uncle, Sir William, who bore so good a character. He added, that nothing but mirth and feasting were going forward; that all the country praised the young bride's beauty, and the bridegroom's fine person, and that they were immensely fond of each other; concluding, that he could not help thinking Mr. Thornhill one of the most happy men in the world.

‘Why, let him if he can,’ returned I: ‘but, my son, observe this bed of straw, and unsheltering roof; those mouldering walls, and humid floor; my wretched body thus disabled by fire, and my children weeping round me for bread: you have come home, my child, to all this; yet here, even here, you see a man that would not for a thousand worlds exchange situations. O, my children, if you could but learn to commune with your own hearts, and know what noble company you can make them, you would little regard the elegance and splendour of the worthless. Almost all men have been taught to call life a passage, and themselves the travellers. The similitude still may be improved, when we observe that the good are joyful and serene, like travellers that are going towards home; the wicked but by intervals happy, like travellers that are going into exile.’

My compassion for my poor daughter, overpowered by this new disaster, interrupted what I had farther to observe. I bade her mother support her, and after a short time she recovered. She appeared from that time more calm, and I imagined had gained a new degree

of resolution: but appearances deceived me; for her tranquillity was the languor of overwrought resentment. A supply of provisions, charitably sent us by my kind parishioners, seemed to diffuse new cheerfulness among the rest of my family, nor was I displeased at seeing them once more sprightly and at ease. It would have been unjust to damp their satisfactions, merely to condole with resolute melancholy, or to burden them with a sadness they did not feel. Thus, once more, the tale went round, and the song was demanded, and cheerfulness condescended to hover round our little habitation.

CHAP. V.

FRESH CALAMITIES.

THE next morning the sun arose with peculiar warmth for the season; so that we agreed to breakfast together on the honey-suckle bank: where, while we sat, my youngest daughter, at my request, joined her voice to the concert on the trees about us. It was in this place my poor Olivia first met her seducer, and every object served to recal her sadness. But that melancholy, which is excited by objects of pleasure, or inspired by sounds of harmony, soothes the heart instead of corroding it. Her mother, too, upon this occasion, felt a pleasing distress, and wept, and loved her daughter as before. ‘Do, my pretty Olivia,’ cried she, ‘let us have that little melancholy air your papa was so fond of; your sister Sophy has already obliged us. Do, child, it will please your old father.’ She complied in a manner so exquisitely pathetic, as moved me.

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
 And finds, too late, that men betray,
 What charm can soothe her melancholy,
 What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
 To hide her shame from every eye,
 To give repentance to her lover,
 And wring his bosom, is—to die.

As she was concluding the last stanza, to which an interruption in her voice from sorrow gave peculiar softness, the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at a distance alarmed us all, but particularly increased the uneasiness of my eldest daughter, who, desirous of shunning her betrayer, returned to the house with her sister. In a few minutes he was alighted from his chariot, and making up to the place where I was still sitting, enquired after my health with his usual air of familiarity. 'Sir,' replied I, 'your present assurance only serves to aggravate the baseness of your character; and there was a time when I would have chastised your insolence, for presuming thus to appear before me. But now you are safe; for age has cooled my passions, and my calling restrains them.'

'I vow, my dear Sir,' returned he, 'I am amazed at all this; nor can I understand what it means! I hope you don't think your daughter's late excursion with me had any thing criminal in it.'

'Go,' cried I, 'thou art a wretch, a poor pitiful wretch, and every way a liar; but your meanness secures you from my anger! Yet, Sir, I am descended from a family that would not have borne this! And so, thou vile thing, to gratify a momentary passion, thou hast made one poor creature wretched for

‘ life, and polluted a family that had nothing but honour for their portion.’

‘ If she or you,’ returned he, ‘ are resolved to be miserable, I cannot help it. But you may still be happy; and whatever opinion you may have formed of me, you shall ever find me ready to contribute to it. We can marry her to another in a short time; and what is more, she may keep her lover beside; for I protest I shall ever continue to have a true regard for her.’

I found all my passions alarmed at this new degrading proposal; for though the mind may often be calm under great injuries, little villainy can at any time get within the soul, and fling it into rage. ‘ Avoid my fight, thou reptile!’ cried I, ‘ nor continue to insult me with thy presence. Were my brave son at home, he would not suffer this; but I am old and disabled, and every way undone.’

‘ I find,’ cried he, ‘ you are bent upon obliging me to talk in a harsher manner than I intended. But as I have shewn you what may be hoped from my friendship, it may not be improper to represent what may be the consequences of my resentment. My attorney, to whom your late bond has been transferred, threatens hard; nor do I know how to prevent the course of justice, except by paying the money myself, which, as I have been at some expences lately, previous to my intended marriage, is not so easy to be done. And then my steward talks of driving for the rent: it is certain he knows his duty; for I never trouble myself with affairs of that nature. Yet still I could wish to serve you, and even to have you and your

‘ daughter present at my marriage, which is shortly to
‘ be solemnized with Miss Wilmot; it is even the re-
‘ quest of my charming Arabella herself, whom I hope
‘ you will not refuse.’

‘ Mr. Thornhill,’ replied I, ‘ hear me once for all:
‘ as to your marriage with any but my daughter, that
‘ I never will consent to; and though your friendship
‘ could raise me to a throne, or your resentment sink
‘ me to the grave, yet would I despise both. Thou
‘ hast once woefully, irreparably deceived me. I re-
‘ posed my heart upon thine honour, and have found
‘ its baseness. Never more, therefore, expect friendship
‘ from me. Go, and possess what fortune has given
‘ thee—beauty, riches, health, and pleasure. Go, and
‘ leave me to want, infamy, disease, and sorrow. Yet
‘ humbled as I am, shall my heart still vindicate its
‘ dignity, and though thou hast my forgiveness, thou
‘ shalt ever have my contempt.’

‘ If so,’ returned he, ‘ depend upon it you shall feel
‘ the effects of this insolence, and we shall shortly see
‘ which is the fittest object of scorn, you or me.’ Upon
which he departed abruptly.

My wife and son, who were present at this interview, seemed terrified with apprehension. My daughters, also, finding that he was gone, came out to be informed of the result of our conference; which, when known, alarmed them not less than the rest. But as to myself, I disregarded the utmost stretch of his malevolence: he had already struck the blow, and I now stood prepared to repel every new effort—like one of those instruments used in the art of war, which, however thrown, still presents a point to receive the enemy.

We soon, however, found that he had not threatened in vain; for the very next morning his steward came to demand my annual rent, which, by the train of accidents already related, I was unable to pay. The consequence of my incapacity was, his driving my cattle that evening, and their being appraised and sold the next day for less than half their value. My wife and children now therefore intreated me to comply upon any terms, rather than incur certain destruction. They even begged of me to admit his visits once more, and used all their little eloquence to paint the calamities I was going to endure—the terrors of a prison in so rigorous a season as the present, with the danger that threatened my health from the late accident that happened by the fire. But I continued inflexible.

‘Why, my treasures,’ cried I, ‘why will you thus attempt to persuade me to the thing that is not right! My duty has taught me to forgive him, but my conscience will not permit me to approve. Would you have me applaud to the world what my heart must internally condemn? Would you have me tamely sit down and flatter our infamous betrayer; and, to avoid a prison, continually suffer the more galling bonds of mental confinement? No, never. If we are to be taken from this abode, only let us hold to the right, and wherever we are thrown, we can still retire to a charming apartment, when we can look round our own hearts with intrepidity and with pleasure!’

In this manner we spent that evening. Early the next morning, as the snow had fallen in great abundance in the night, my son was employed in clearing it away, and opening a passage before the door. He

had not been thus engaged long, when he came running in, with looks all pale, to tell us that two strangers, whom he knew to be officers of justice, were making towards the house:

Just as he spoke they came in, and approaching the bed where I lay, after previously informing me of their employment and business, made me their prisoner, bidding me prepare to go with them to the county gaol, which was eleven miles off.

‘ My friends,’ said I, ‘ this is severe weather in which you are come to take me to a prison; and it is particularly unfortunate at this time, as one of my arms has lately been burnt in a terrible manner, and it has thrown me into a slight fever, and I want clothes to cover me, and I am now too weak and old to walk far in such deep snow: but if it must be so—’

I then turned to my wife and children, and directed them to get together what few things were left us, and to prepare immediately for leaving this place. I entreated them to be expeditious: and desired my son to assist his eldest sister; who, from a consciousness that she was the cause of all our calamities, was fallen, and had lost anguish in insensibility. I encouraged my wife, who, pale and trembling, clasped our affrighted little ones in her arms, that clung to her bosom in silence, dreading to look round at the strangers. In the meantime my youngest daughter prepared for our departure, and as she received several hints to use dispatch, in about an hour we were ready to depart.

CHAP. VI.

NO SITUATION, HOWEVER WRETCHED IT SEEMS, BUT HAS
SOME SORT OF COMFORT ATTENDING IT.

WE set forward from this peaceful neighbourhood, and walked on slowly. My eldest daughter being enfeebled by a slow fever, which had begun for some days to undermine her constitution, one of the officers, who had an horse, kindly took her behind him: for even these men cannot entirely divest themselves of humanity. My son led one of the little ones by the hand, and my wife the other; while I leaned upon my youngest girl, whose tears fell, not for her own, but my distresses.

We were now got from my late dwelling about two miles, when we saw a crowd running and shouting behind us, consisting of about fifty of my poorest parishioners. These, with dreadful imprecations, soon seized upon the two officers of justice, and swearing they would never see their minister go to a gaol while they had a drop of blood to shed in his defence, were going to use them with great severity. The consequences might have been fatal, had I not immediately interposed, and with some difficulty rescued the officers from the hands of the enraged multitude. My children, who looked upon my delivery now as certain, appeared transported with joy, and were incapable of containing their raptures. But they were soon undeceived, upon hearing me address the poor deluded people, who came, as they imagined, to do me service.

‘What! my friends,’ cried I, ‘and is this the way
‘you love me! Is this the manner you obey the in-

‘structions I have given you from the pulpit! Thus
‘to fly in the face of justice, and bring down ruin on
‘yourselves and me! Which is your ring-leader?
‘Shew me the man that has thus seduced you. As
‘sure as he lives, he shall feel my resentment. Alas!
‘my poor deluded flock, return back to the duty you
‘owe to God, to your country, and to me. I shall yet
‘perhaps one day see you in greater felicity here, and
‘contribute to make your lives more happy. But let
‘it at least be my comfort when I pen my fold for im-
‘mortality, that not one here shall be wanting.’

They now seemed all repentance, and melting into tears, came one after the other to bid me farewell. I shook each tenderly by the hand, and leaving them my blessing, proceeded forward without meeting any further interruption. Some hours before night we reached the town, or rather village; for it consisted but of a few mean houses, having lost all its former opulence, and retaining no marks of its ancient superiority but the gaol.

Upon entering we put up at an inn, where we had such refreshments as could most readily be procured, and I supped with my family with my usual cheerfulness. After seeing them properly accommodated for that night, I next attended the sheriff’s officers to the prison, which had formerly been built for the purposes of war, and consisted of one large apartment, strongly grated, and paved with stone, common to both felons and debtors at certain hours in the four-and-twenty. Besides this, every prisoner had a separate cell, where he was locked in for the night.

I expected upon my entrance to find nothing but lamentations, and various sounds of misery; but it was

very different. The prisoners seemed all employed in one common design, that of forgetting thought in merriment or clamour. I was apprized of the usual perquisite required upon these occasions, and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money I had was very near being all exhausted. This was immediately sent away for liquor, and the whole prison was soon filled with riot, laughter, and profaneness.

‘How,’ cried I to myself, ‘shall men so very wicked be cheerful, and shall I be melancholy! I feel only the same confinement with them, and I think I have more reason to be happy.’

With such reflections I laboured to become cheerful; but cheerfulness was never yet produced by effort, which is itself painful. As I was sitting therefore in a corner of the gaol, in a pensive posture, one of my fellow-prisoners came up, and sitting by me, entered into conversation. It was my constant rule in life never to avoid the conversation of any man who seemed to desire it: for if good, I might profit by his instruction; if bad, he might be assisted by mine. I found this to be a knowing man, of strong unlettered sense, but a thorough knowledge of the world, as it is called, or, more properly speaking, of human nature on the wrong side. He asked me if I had taken care to provide myself with a bed, which was a circumstance I had never once attended to.

‘That’s unfortunate,’ cried he, ‘as you are allowed nothing but straw, and your apartment is very large and cold. However, you seem to be something of a gentleman, and as I have been one myself in my time, part of my bed-clothes are heartily at your service.’

I thanked him, professing my surprise at finding such humanity in a gaol, in misfortunes; adding, to let him see that I was a scholar, that the sage ancient seemed to understand the value of company in affliction, when he said, *ton kosmon aire, ei dos ton etairon*; ‘and in fact,’ continued I, ‘what is the world if it affords only solitude?’

‘You talk of the world, Sir,’ returned my fellow-prisoner; ‘the world is in its dotage, and yet the cosmogony, or creation of the world, has puzzled the philosophers of every age. What a medley of opinions have they not broached upon the creation of the world. Sanconiathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus, have all attempted it in vain. The latter has these words, *Anarchon ara kai atelutaion to pan*, which implies—’ ‘I ask pardon, Sir,’ cried I, ‘for interrupting so much learning; but I think I have heard all this before. Have I not had the pleasure of once seeing you at Welbridge fair, and is not your name Ephraim Jenkinson?’ At this demand, he only sighed. ‘I suppose you must recollect,’ resumed I, ‘one Doctor Primrose, from whom you bought a horse.’

He now at once recollected me, for the gloominess of the place and the approaching night had prevented his distinguishing my features before. ‘Yes, Sir,’ returned Mr. Jenkinson, ‘I remember you perfectly well; I bought an horse, but forgot to pay for him. Your neighbour Flamborough is the only prosecutor I am any way afraid of at the next assizes; for he intends to swear positively against me as a coiner. I am heartily sorry, Sir, I ever deceived you, or indeed

‘any man; for you see,’ continued he, shewing his shackles, ‘what my tricks have brought me to.’

‘Well, Sir,’ replied I, ‘your kindness in offering me assistance, when you could expect no return, shall be repaid with my endeavours to soften or totally suppress Mr. Flamborough’s evidence, and I will send my son to him for that purpose the first opportunity; nor do I in the least doubt but he will comply with my request; and as to my own evidence, you need be under no uneasiness about that.’

‘Well, Sir,’ cried he, ‘all the return I can make shall be your’s. You shall have more than half my bed-clothes to-night, and I’ll take care to stand your friend in the prison, where I think I have some influence.’

I thanked him, and could not avoid being surprised at the present youthful change in his aspect; for at the time I had seen him before, he appeared at least sixty. ‘Sir,’ answered he, ‘you are little acquainted with the world; I had at that time false hair, and have learned the art of counterfeiting every age from seventeen to seventy. Ah, Sir, had I but bestowed half the pains in learning a trade, that I have in learning to be a scoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this day. But, rogue as I am, still I may be your friend, and that, perhaps, when you least expect it.’

We were now prevented from farther conversation by the arrival of the gaoler’s servants, who came to call over the prisoners names and lock up for the night. A fellow also with a bundle of straw for my bed attended, who led me along a dark narrow passage into a room paved like the common prison, and in one corner

of this I spread my bed, and the clothes given me by my fellow-prisoner; which done, my conductor, who was civil enough, bade me a good night. After my usual meditations, and having praised my heavenly corrector, I laid myself down, and slept with the utmost tranquillity till morning.

CHAP. VII.

A REFORMATION IN THE GAOL; TO MAKE LAWS COMPLETE
THEY SHOULD REWARD AS WELL AS PUNISH.

THE next morning early I was awakened by my family, whom I found in tears at my bed-side. The gloomy appearance of every thing about us, it seems, had daunted them. I gently rebuked their sorrow, assuring them I had never slept with greater tranquillity, and next enquired after my eldest daughter, who was not among them. They informed me that yesterday's uneasiness and fatigue had increased her fever, and it was judged proper to leave her behind. My next care was to send my son to procure a room or two to lodge my family in, as near the prison as conveniently could be found. He obeyed, but could only find one apartment, which was hired at a small expence, for his mother and sisters, the gaoler with humanity consenting to let him and his two little brothers be in the prison with me. A bed was therefore prepared for them in a corner of the room, which I thought answered very conveniently. I was willing, however, previously to know whether my little children chose to lie in a place which seemed to fright them upon entrance.

‘ Well,’ cried I, ‘ my good boys, how do you like your bed? I hope you are not afraid to lie in this room, dark as it appears.’

‘ No, papa,’ says Dick, ‘ I am not afraid to lie any where, where you are.’

‘ And I,’ says Bill, who was yet but four years old, ‘ love every place best that my papa is in.’

After this, I allotted to each of the family what they were to do. My daughter was particularly directed to watch her declining sister’s health; my wife was to attend me; my little boys were to read to me: ‘ And as for you, my son,’ continued I, ‘ it is by the labour of your hands we must all hope to be supported. Your wages, as a day-labourer, will be full sufficient, with proper frugality, to maintain us all, and comfortably too. Thou art now sixteen years old, and hast strength, and it was given thee, my son, for very useful purposes: for it must save from famine your helpless parents and family. Prepare then this evening to look out for work against to-morrow, and bring home every night what money you earn for our support.’

Having thus instructed him, and settled the rest, I walked down to the common prison, where I could enjoy more air and room. But I was not long there, when the execrations, lewdness and brutality, that invaded me on every side, drove me back to my apartment again. Here I sat for some time pondering upon the strange infatuation of wretches, who, finding all mankind in open arms against them, were labouring to make themselves a future and a tremendous enemy.

Their insensibility excited my highest compassion, and

blotted my own uneasiness from my mind. It even appeared a duty incumbent upon me to attempt to reclaim them. I resolved therefore once more to return, and in spite of their contempt to give them my advice, and conquer them by perseverance. Going therefore among them again, I informed Mr. Jenkinson of my design; at which he laughed heartily, but communicated it to the rest. The proposal was received with the greatest good humour, as it promised to afford a new fund of entertainment to persons who had now no other resource for mirth, but what could be derived from ridicule or debauchery.

I therefore read them a portion of the service with a loud unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occasion. Lewd whispers, groans of contrition burlesqued, winking and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural solemnity to read on, sensible that what I did might amend some, but could itself receive no contamination from any.

After reading, I entered upon my exhortation, which was rather calculated at first to amuse them than to reprove. I previously observed that no other motive but their welfare could induce me to this; that I was their fellow-prisoner, and now got nothing by preaching. I was sorry, I said, to hear them so very profane; because they got nothing by it, and might lose a great deal: 'For, be assured, my friends,' cried I, '(for you are my friends, however the world may disclaim your friendship) though you swore twelve thousand oaths in a day, it would not put one penny in your purse. Then what signifies calling every moment upon the

‘ devil, and courting his friendship, since you find how
‘ scurvily he uses you. He has given you nothing here,
‘ you find, but a mouthful of oaths and an empty belly;
‘ and, by the best accounts I have of him, he will give
‘ you nothing that’s good hereafter.

‘ If used ill in our dealings with one man, we na-
‘ turally go elsewhere. Were it not worth your while
‘ then, just to try how you may like the usage of ano-
‘ ther Master, who gives you fair promises, at least, to
‘ come to him? Surely, my friends, of all stupidity in
‘ the world, his must be the greatest, who, after rob-
‘ bing an house, runs to the thief-takers for protection.
‘ And yet how are you more wise? You are all seek-
‘ ing comfort from one that has already betrayed you,
‘ applying to a more malicious being than any thief-
‘ taker of them all; for they only decoy and then hang
‘ you; but he decoys and hangs, and, what is worst of
‘ all, will not let you loose after the hangman has done.’

When I had concluded, I received the compliments of my audience, some of whom came and shook me by the hand, swearing that I was a very honest fellow, and that they desired my further acquaintance. I therefore promised to repeat my lecture next day, and actually conceived some hope of making a reformation here: for it had ever been my opinion, that no man was past the hour of amendment, every heart lying open to the shafts of reproof, if the archer could but take a proper aim. When I had thus satisfied my mind, I went back to my apartment, where my wife prepared a frugal meal, while Mr. Jenkinson begged leave to add his dinner to ours, and partake of the pleasure, as he was kind enough to express it, of my conversation. He

had not yet seen my family, for as they came to my apartment by a door in the narrow passage already described, by this means they avoided the common prison. Jenkinson at the first interview therefore seemed not a little struck with the beauty of my youngest daughter, which her pensive air contributed to heighten, and my little ones did not pass unnoticed.

‘Alas, doctor,’ cried he, ‘these children are too handsome and too good for such a place as this!’

‘Why, Mr. Jenkinson,’ replied I, ‘thank Heaven, my children are pretty tolerable in morals, and if they be good, it matters little for the rest.’

‘I fancy, Sir,’ returned my fellow-prisoner, ‘that it must give you a great comfort to have this little family about you.’

‘A comfort, Mr. Jenkinson!’ replied I, ‘yes, it is indeed a comfort, and I would not be without them for all the world; for they can make a dungeon seem a palace. There is but one way in this life of wounding my happiness, and that is by injuring them.’

‘I am afraid, then, Sir,’ cried he, ‘that I am in some measure culpable; for I think I see here,’ (looking at my son Moses) ‘one that I have injured, and by whom I wish to be forgiven.’

My son immediately recollected his voice and features, though he had before seen him in disguise, and taking him by the hand, with a smile forgave him. ‘Yet,’ continued he, ‘I can’t help wondering at what you could see in my face, to think me a proper mark for deception.’

‘My dear Sir,’ returned the other, ‘it was not your face, but your white stockings and the black ribband

‘on your hair, that allured me. But no disparagement to your parts, I have deceived wiser men than you in my time; and yet, with all my tricks, the blockheads have been too many for me at last.’

‘I suppose,’ cried my son, ‘that the narrative of such a life as your’s must be extremely instructive and amusing.’

‘Not much of either,’ returned Mr. Jenkinson. ‘Those relations which describe the tricks and vices only of mankind, by increasing our suspicion in life, retard our success. The traveller that distrusts every person he meets, and turns back upon the appearance of every man that looks like a robber, seldom arrives in time at his journey’s end.’

‘Indeed I think, from my own experience, that the knowing one is the silliest fellow under the sun. I was thought cunning from my very childhood; when but seven years old, the ladies would say that I was a perfect little man; at fourteen I knew the world, cocked my hat, and loved the ladies; at twenty, though I was perfectly honest, yet every one thought me so cunning, that no one would trust me. Thus I was at last obliged to turn sharper in my own defence, and have lived ever since, my head throbbing with schemes to deceive, and my heart palpitating with fears of detection. I used often to laugh at your honest simple neighbour Flamborough, and one way or another generally cheated him once a year. Yet still the honest man went forward without suspicion, and grew rich, while I still continued tricky and cunning, and was poor, without the consolation of being honest. However,’ continued he, ‘let me know your case,

‘ and what has brought you here; perhaps, though I
 ‘ have not skill to avoid a gaol myself, I may extricate
 ‘ my friends.’

In compliance with this curiosity, I informed him of the whole train of accidents and follies that had plunged me into my present troubles, and my utter inability to get free.

After hearing my story, and pausing some minutes, he flapt his forehead, as if he had hit upon something material, and took his leave, saying, he would try what could be done.

CHAP. VIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE next morning I communicated to my wife and children the scheme I had planned of reforming the prisoners, which they received with universal disapprobation, alledging, the impossibility and impropriety of it; adding, that my endeavours would no way contribute to their amendment, but might probably disgrace my calling.

‘ Excuse me,’ returned I; ‘ these people, however
 ‘ fallen, are still men, and that is a very good title to
 ‘ my affections. Good counsel rejected, returns to enrich the giver’s bosom; and though the instruction I
 ‘ communicate may not mend them, yet it will assuredly mend myself. If these wretches, my children,
 ‘ were princes, there would be thousands ready to offer
 ‘ their ministry; but, in my opinion, the heart that is
 ‘ buried in a dungeon, is as precious as that seated upon
 ‘ a throne. Yes, my treasures, if I can mend them I

‘ will; perhaps they will not all despise me : perhaps I
‘ may catch up even one from the gulph, and that will
‘ be great gain; for is there upon earth a gem so pre-
‘ cious as the human soul?’

Thus saying, I left them, and descended to the common prison, where I found the prisoners very merry, expecting my arrival; and each prepared with some gaol trick to play upon the doctor. Thus as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry, as if by accident, and then asked my pardon. A second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book. A third would cry ‘Amen!’ in such an affected tone as gave the rest great delight. A fourth had slyly picked my pocket of my spectacles. But there was one whose trick gave more universal pleasure than all the rest; for observing the manner in which I had disposed my books on the table before me, he very dextrously displaced one of them, and put an obscene jest-book of his own in the place. However, I took no notice of all that this mischievous groupe of little beings could do; but went on, perfectly sensible that what was ridiculous in my attempt would excite mirth only the first or second time, while what was serious would be permanent. My design succeeded, and in less than six days some were penitent, and all attentive.

It was now that I applauded my perseverance and address, at thus giving sensibility to wretches divested of every moral feeling, and now began to think of doing them temporal services also, by rendering their situation somewhat more comfortable. Their time had hitherto been divided between famine and excess, tu-

multuous riot and bitter repining. Their only employment was quarrelling among each other, playing at cribbage, and cutting tobacco-sloppers. From this last mode of idle industry I took the hint of setting such as chose to work at cutting pegs for tobacconists and shoemakers, the proper wood being bought by a general subscription, and when manufactured, sold by my appointment: so that each earned something every day; a trifle, indeed, but sufficient to maintain him.

I did not stop here, but instituted fines for the punishment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar industry. Thus, in less than a fortnight, I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience.

And it were highly to be wished, that legislative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than severity: that it would seem convinced that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making punishments familiar, but formidable. Then, instead of our present prisons, which find or make men guilty, which inclose wretches for the commission of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands—it were to be wished we had, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and solitude, where the accused might be attended by such as could give them repentance if guilty, or new motives of virtue if innocent. And this, but not the increasing punishments, is the way to mend a state: nor can I avoid even questioning the validity of that right which social combinations have assumed, of

capitally punishing offences of a slight nature. In cases of murder, their right is obvious, as it is the duty of us all, from the law of self-defence, to cut off that man who has shewn a disregard for the life of another. Against such, all nature rises in arms; but it is not so against him who steals my property. Natural law gives me no right to take away his life, as by that the horse he steals is as much his property as mine. If, then, I have any right, it must be from a compact made between us, that he who deprives the other of his horse, shall die. But this is a false compact; because no man has a right to barter his life, no more than take it away, as it is not his own. And besides, the compact is inadequate, and would be set aside even in a court of modern equity, as there is a great penalty for a trifling convenience, since it is far better that two men should live, than one man should ride. But a compact that is false between two men, is equally so between an hundred and an hundred thousand; for as ten millions of circles can never make a square, so the united voice of myriads cannot lend the smallest foundation to falsehood. It is thus that reason speaks, and untutored nature says the same thing. Savages, that are directed by natural law alone, are very tender of the lives of each other; they seldom shed blood but to retaliate former cruelty.

Our Saxon ancestors, fierce as they were in war, had but few executions in times of peace; and in all commencing governments that have the print of nature still strong upon them, scarce any crime is held capital.

It is among the citizens of a refined community that penal laws, which are in the hands of the rich, are laid upon the poor. Government, while it grows older,

seems to acquire the moroseness of age; and as if our property were become dearer in proportion as it increased—as if the more enormous our wealth, the more extensive our fears—all our possessions are paled up with new edicts every day, and hung round with gibbets to scare every invader.

I cannot tell, whether it is from the number of our penal laws, or the licentiousness of our people, that this country should shew more convicts in a year than half the dominions of Europe united. Perhaps it is owing to both; for they mutually produce each other. When by indiscriminate penal laws a nation beholds the same punishment affixed to dissimilar degrees of guilt, from perceiving no distinction in the penalty, the people are led to lose all sense of distinction in the crime, and this distinction is the bulwark of all morality: thus the multitude of laws produce new vices, and new vices call for fresh restraints.

It were to be wished then that power, instead of contriving new laws to punish vice, instead of drawing hard the cords of society till a convulsion come to burst them, instead of cutting away wretches as useless, before we have tried their utility, instead of converting correction into vengeance, it were to be wished that we tried the restrictive arts of government, and made law the protector, but not the tyrant, of the people. We should then find, that creatures whose souls are held as dross, only wanted the hand of a refiner; we should then find that wretches, now stuck up for long tortures, lest luxury should feel a momentary pang, might, if properly treated, serve to shew the state in times of danger; that as their faces are like ours, their hearts are so too; that

few minds are so base, as that perseverance cannot amend; that a man may see his last crime without dying for it; and that very little blood will serve to cement our security.

CHAP. IX.

HAPPINESS AND MISERY RATHER THE RESULT OF PRUDENCE
THAN OF VIRTUE IN THIS LIFE; TEMPORAL EVILS OR
FELICITIES BEING REGARDED BY HEAVEN AS THINGS
MERELY IN THEMSELVES TRIFLING, AND UN-
WORTHY ITS CARE IN THE DISTRIBUTION.

I HAD now been confined more than a fortnight, but had not since my arrival been visited by my dear Olivia, and I greatly longed to see her. Having communicated my wishes to my wife, the next morning the poor girl entered my apartment, leaning on her sister's arm. The change which I saw in her countenance struck me. The numberless graces that once resided there were now fled, and the hand of death seemed to have moulded every feature to alarm me. Her temples were sunk, her forehead was tense, and a fatal paleness sat upon her cheek.

'I am glad to see thee, my dear,' cried I; 'but why this dejection, Livy? I hope, my love, you have too great a regard for me, to permit disappointment thus to undermine a life which I prize as my own. Be cheerful, child, and we may yet see happier days.'

'You have ever, Sir,' replied she, 'been kind to me, and it adds to my pain, that I shall never have an opportunity of sharing that happiness you promise. Happiness, I fear, is no longer reserved for

‘ me here ; and I long to be rid of a place where I have
‘ only found distress. Indeed, Sir, I wish you would
‘ make a proper submission to Mr. Thornhill ; it may,
‘ in some measure, induce him to pity you, and it will
‘ give me relief in dying.’

‘ Never, child,’ replied I, ‘ never will I be brought
‘ to acknowledge my daughter a prostitute ; for though
‘ the world may look upon your offence with scorn, let
‘ it be mine to regard it as a mark of credulity, not of
‘ guilt. My dear, I am no ways miserable in this place,
‘ however dismal it may seem ; and be assured, that
‘ while you continue to bless me by living, he shall
‘ never have my consent to make you more wretched
‘ by marrying another.’

After the departure of my daughter, my fellow-prisoner, who was by at this interview, sensibly enough expostulated upon my obstinacy, in refusing a submission which promised to give me freedom. He observed, that the rest of my family were not to be sacrificed to the peace of one child alone, and she the only one who had offended me. ‘ Besides,’ added he, ‘ I don’t know
‘ if it be just thus to obstruct the union of man and
‘ wife, which you do at present, by refusing to consent
‘ to a match which you cannot hinder, but may render
‘ unhappy.’

‘ Sir,’ replied I, ‘ you are unacquainted with the
‘ man that oppresses us. I am very sensible that no submission I can make could procure me liberty even
‘ for an hour. I am told, that even in this very room,
‘ a debtor of his, no later than last year, died for want.
‘ But though my submission and approbation could
‘ transfer me from hence to the most beautiful apart-

‘ment he is possessed of, yet I would grant neither, as something whispers me, that it would be giving a sanction to adultery. While my daughter lives, no other marriage of his shall ever be legal in my eye. Were she removed, indeed, I should be the basest of men, from any resentment of my own, to attempt putting asunder those who wish for an union. No, villain as he is, I should then wish him married, to prevent the consequences of his future debaucheries. But now should I not be the most cruel of all fathers, to sign an instrument which must send my child to the grave, merely to avoid a prison myself; and thus, to escape one pang, break my child’s heart with a thousand.’ He acquiesced in the justice of this answer, but could not avoid observing, that he feared my daughter’s life was already too much wasted to keep me long a prisoner. ‘However,’ continued he, ‘though you refuse to submit to the nephew, I hope you have no objection to laying your case before the uncle, who has the first character in the kingdom for every thing that is just and good. I would advise you to send him a letter by the post, intimating all his nephew’s ill usage, and my life for it, that in three days you shall have an answer.’ I thanked him for the hint, and instantly set about complying; but I wanted paper, and unluckily all our money had been laid out that morning in provisions; however, he supplied me.

For the three ensuing days I was in a state of anxiety, to know what reception my letter might meet with; but in the mean time was frequently solicited by my wife to submit to any conditions rather than remain here, and every hour received repeated accounts of

the decline of my daughter's health. The third day and the fourth arrived, but I received no answer to my letter: the complaints of a stranger against a favourite nephew, were no way likely to succeed; so that these hopes soon vanished like all my former. My mind, however, still supported itself, though confinement and bad air began to make a visible alteration in my health, and my arm that had suffered in the fire grew worse. My children, however, sat by me, and while I was stretched on my straw, read to me by turns, or listened and wept at my instructions. But my daughter's health declining faster than mine, every message from her contributed to increase my apprehensions and pain. The fifth morning after I had written the letter which was sent Sir William Thornhill, I was alarmed with an account that she was speechless. Now it was that confinement was truly painful to me; my soul was bursting from its prison to be near the pillow of my child, to comfort, to strengthen her, to receive her last wishes, and teach her soul the way to heaven! Another account came—she was expiring, and yet I was debarred the small comfort of weeping by her. My fellow-prisoner some time after came with the last account. He bade me be patient—she was dead! The next morning he returned, and found me with my two little ones, now my only companions, who were using all their innocent efforts to comfort me. They intreated to read to me, and bade me not cry, for I was now too old to weep. 'And is not my sister an angel now, papa,' cried the eldest, 'and why then are you sorry for her? I wish I were an angel out of this frightful place, if my papa were with me.'—'Yes,' added my youngest

darling, 'heaven, where my sister is, is a finer place than this, and there are none but good people there, and the people here are very bad.'

Mr. Jenkinson interrupted their harmless prattle, by observing, that now my daughter was no more, I should seriously think of the rest of my family, and attempt to save my own life, which was every day declining for want of necessaries and wholesome air. He added, that it was now incumbent on me to sacrifice any pride or resentment of my own to the welfare of those who depended on me for support; and that I was now, both by reason and justice, obliged to try to reconcile my landlord.

'Heaven be praised,' replied I, 'there is no pride left me now. I should detest my own heart, if I saw either pride or resentment lurking there. On the contrary, as my oppressor has been once my parishioner, I hope one day to present him up an unpolluted soul at the eternal tribunal. No, Sir, I have no resentment now; and though he has taken from me what I held dearer than all his treasures, though he has wrung my heart, for I am sick almost to fainting, very sick, my fellow-prisoner, yet that shall never inspire me with vengeance. I am now willing to approve his marriage, and if this submission can do him any pleasure, let him know, that if I have done him any injury I am sorry for it.' Mr. Jenkinson took pen and ink, and wrote down my submission nearly as I have expressed it, to which I signed my name. My son was employed to carry the letter to Mr. Thornhill, who was then at his seat in the country. He went, and in about six hours returned with a verbal

answer. He had some difficulty, he said, to get a fight of his landlord, as the servants were insolent and suspicious; but he accidentally saw him as he was going out upon business, preparing for his marriage, which was to be in three days. He continued to inform us, that he stepped up in the humblest manner, and delivered the letter, which, when Mr. Thornhill had read, he said that all submission was now too late and unnecessary; that he had heard of our application to his uncle, which met with the contempt it deserved; and as for the rest, that all future applications should be directed to his attorney, not to him. He observed, however, that as he had a very good opinion of the discretion of the two young ladies, they might have been the most agreeable intercessors.

‘ Well, Sir,’ said I to my fellow-prisoner, ‘ you now discover the temper of the man who oppresses me. He can at once be facetious and cruel; but let him use me as he will, I shall soon be free, in spite of all his bolts to restrain me. I am now drawing towards an abode that looks brighter as I approach it: this expectation cheers my afflictions, and though I leave an helpless family of orphans behind me, yet they will not be utterly forsaken; some friend, perhaps, will be found to assist them for the sake of their poor father, and some may charitably relieve them for the sake of their Heavenly father.’

Just as I spoke, my wife, whom I had not seen that day before, appeared with looks of terror, and making efforts, but unable to speak. ‘ Why, my love,’ cried I, ‘ why will you thus increase my afflictions by your own? What though no submission can turn our severe

‘master, though he has doomed me to die in this place of wretchedness, and though we have lost a darling child, yet still you will find comfort in your other children when I shall be no more.’—‘We have indeed lost,’ returned she, ‘a darling child! My Sophia, my dearest, is gone—snatched from us, carried off by ruffians!’

‘How, Madam!’ cried my fellow-prisoner, ‘Miss Sophia carried off by villains! Sure it cannot be!’

She could only answer with a fixed look, and a flood of tears. But one of the prisoners’ wives, who was present, and came in with her, gave us a more distinct account: she informed us, that as my wife, my daughter, and herself, were taking a walk together on the great road, a little way out of the village, a post-chaise and pair drove up to them, and instantly stopt. Upon which a well-drest man, but not Mr. Thornhill, stepping out, clasped my daughter round the waist, and, forcing her in, bid the postillion drive on, so that they were out of sight in a moment.

‘Now,’ cried I, ‘the sum of my miseries is made up, nor is it in the power of any thing on earth to give me another pang. What! not one left! not leave me one! the monster! the child that was next my heart! she had the beauty of an angel, and almost the wisdom of an angel. But support that woman, nor let her fall. Not to leave me one!’—‘Alas, my husband,’ said my wife, ‘you seem to want comfort even more than I. Our distresses are great; but I could bear this and more, if I saw you but easy. They may take away my children, and all the world, if they leave me but you.’

My son, who was present, endeavoured to moderate our grief; he bade us take comfort, for he hoped that we might still have reason to be thankful.—‘My child,’ cried I, ‘look round the world, and see if there be any happiness left me now. Is not every ray of comfort shut out; while all our bright prospects only lie beyond the grave.’—‘My dear father,’ returned he, ‘I hope there is still something that will give you an interval of satisfaction; for I have a letter from my brother George.’—‘What of him, my child,’ interrupted I, ‘does he know our misery? I hope my boy is exempt from any part of what his wretched family suffers.’—‘Yes, Sir,’ returned he, ‘he is perfectly gay, cheerful, and happy. His letter brings nothing but good news; he is the favourite of his colonel, who promises to procure him the very next lieutenancy that becomes vacant!’

‘And are you sure of all this,’ cried my wife; ‘are you sure that nothing ill has befallen my boy?’—‘Nothing indeed, Madam,’ returned my son; ‘you shall see the letter, which will give you the highest pleasure: and if any thing can procure you comfort, I am sure that will.’—‘But are you sure,’ still repeated she, ‘that the letter is from himself, and that he is really so happy?’—‘Yes, Madam,’ replied he, ‘it is certainly his, and he will one day be the credit and the support of our family!’—‘Then I thank Providence,’ cried she, ‘that my last letter to him has miscarried. Yes, my dear,’ continued she, turning to me, ‘I will now confess, that though the hand of Heaven is sore upon us in other instances, it has been favourable here. By the last letter I wrote my son,

‘ which was in the bitterness of anger, I desired him, upon his mother’s blessing, and if he had the heart of a man, to see justice done his father and sister, and avenge our cause. But, thanks be to Him who directs all things, it has miscarried, and I am at rest.’

‘ Woman!’ cried I, ‘thou hast done very ill, and at another time my reproaches might have been more severe. Oh! what a tremendous gulph hast thou escaped, that would have buried both thee and him in endless ruin. Providence, indeed, has here been kinder to us than we to ourselves. It has reserved that son to be the father and protector of my children when I shall be away. How unjustly did I complain of being stript of every comfort, when still I hear that he is happy and insensible of our afflictions; still kept in reserve to support his widowed mother, and to protect his brothers and sisters. But what sisters has he left? he has no sisters now, they are all gone, robbed from me, and I am undone!’—‘Father,’ interrupted my son, ‘I beg you will give me leave to read his letter; I know it will please you.’ Upon which, with my permission, he read as follows:

‘ HONoured SIR,

‘ I have called off my imagination a few moments from the pleasures that surround me, to fix it upon objects that are still more pleasing, the dear little fire-side at home. My fancy draws that harmless groupe as listening to every line of this with great composure. I view those faces with delight, which never felt the deforming hand of ambition or distress. But whatever your happiness may be at home, I am sure it will be some addition to it, to hear that I am

‘ perfectly pleased with my situation, and every way
‘ happy here.

‘ Our regiment is countermanded, and is not to
‘ leave the kingdom; the colonel, who professes him-
‘ self my friend, takes me with him to all companies
‘ where he is acquainted, and after my first visit, I ge-
‘ nerally find myself received with increased respect
‘ upon repeating it. I danced last night with Lady
‘ G-----, and could I forget, you know whom, I might
‘ be perhaps successful. But it is my fate still to re-
‘ member others, while I am myself forgotten by most
‘ of my absent friends; and in this number, I fear, Sir,
‘ that I must consider you, for I have long expected
‘ the pleasure of a letter from home to no purpose.
‘ Olivia and Sophia, too, promised to write, but seem to
‘ have forgotten me. Tell them, that they are two
‘ arrant little baggages, and that I am this moment in
‘ a most violent passion with them: yet still, I know
‘ not how, though I want to bluster a little, my heart
‘ is respondent only to softer emotions. Then tell them,
‘ Sir, that after all, I love them affectionately; and be
‘ assured of my ever remaining your dutiful son.’

‘ In all our miseries,’ cried I, ‘ what thanks have we
‘ not to return, that one at least of our family is ex-
‘ empted from what we suffer. Heaven be his guard,
‘ and keep my boy thus happy to be the support of his
‘ widowed mother, and the father of these two babes,
‘ which is all the patrimony I can now bequeath him!
‘ May he keep their innocence from the temptations of
‘ want, and be their conductor in the paths of honour!’
I had scarce said these words, when a noise, like that of
a tumult, seemed to proceed from the prison below; it

died away soon after, and a clanking of fetters was heard along the passage that led to my apartment. The keeper of the prison entered, holding a man all bloody, wounded, and fettered with the heaviest irons. I looked with compassion on the wretch as he approached me, but with horror when I found it was my own son! 'My George! my George! and do I behold thee thus! Wounded! fettered! Is this thy happiness! Is this the manner you return to me? O that this sight could break my heart at once, and let me die!'

'Where, Sir, is your fortitude?' returned my son, with an intrepid voice; 'I must suffer, my life is forfeited, and let them take it.'

I tried to restrain my passion for a few minutes in silence, but I thought I should have died with the effort. 'O, my boy, my heart weeps to behold thee thus, and I cannot, cannot help it! In the moment I thought thee blest, and prayed for thy safety, to behold thee thus again! chained, wounded! And yet the death of the youthful is happy. But I am old, a very old man, and have lived to see this day. To see my children all untimely falling about me, while I continue a wretched survivor in the midst of ruin! May all the curses that ever sunk a soul, fall heavy upon the murderer of my children! May he live, like me, to see—'

'Hold, Sir,' replied my son, 'or I shall blush for thee. How, Sir! forgetful of your age, your holy calling, thus to arrogate the justice of Heaven, and fling those curses upward that must soon descend to crush thy own grey head with destruction! No, Sir, let it be your care now to fit me for that vile death I must shortly suffer, to arm me with hope and resolution,



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‘to give me courage to drink of that bitterness which must shortly be my portion.’

‘My child, you must not die! I am sure no offence of thine can deserve so vile a punishment. My George could never be guilty of any crime to make his ancestors ashamed of him.’

‘Mine, Sir,’ returned my son, ‘is, I fear, an unpardonable one. When I received my mother’s letter from home, I immediately came down, determined to punish the betrayer of our honour, and sent him an order to meet me, which he answered, not in person, but by dispatching four of his domestics to seize me. I wounded one who first assaulted me, and I fear desperately: but the rest made me their prisoner. The coward is determined to put the law in execution against me; the proofs are undeniable; I have sent a challenge, and as I am the first aggressor upon the statute, I see no hopes of pardon. But you have often charmed me with your lessons of fortitude; let me now, Sir, find them in your example.’

‘And, my son, you shall find them. I am now raised above this world, and all the pleasures it can produce. From this moment I break from my heart all the ties that held it down to earth, and will prepare to fit us both for eternity. Yes, my son, I will point out the way, and my soul shall guide yours in the ascent, for we will take our flight together. I now see, and am convinced, you can expect no pardon here, and I can only exhort you to seek it at that greatest tribunal where we both shall shortly answer. But let us not be niggardly in our exhortation, but let all our fellow-prisoners have a share.—Good gaoler, let them be

‘permitted to stand here, while I attempt to improve them.’ Thus saying, I made an effort to rise from my straw, but wanted strength, and was able only to recline against the wall. The prisoners assembled according to my directions, for they loved to hear my counsel; my son and his mother supported me on either side; I looked, and saw that none were wanting, and then addressed them with the following exhortation.

CHAP. X.

THE EQUAL DEALINGS OF PROVIDENCE DEMONSTRATED WITH REGARD TO THE HAPPY AND THE MISERABLE HERE BELOW.

THAT FROM THE NATURE OF PLEASURE AND PAIN,

THE WRETCHED MUST BE REPAID THE

BALANCE OF THEIR SUFFERINGS IN

THE LIFE HEREAFTER.

‘MY friends, my children, and fellow-sufferers, when I reflect on the distribution of good and evil here below, I find that much has been given man to enjoy, yet still more to suffer. Though we should examine the whole world, we shall not find one man so happy as to have nothing left to wish for: but we daily see thousands, who by suicide shew us they have nothing left to hope. In this life, then, it appears that we cannot be entirely blest; but yet we may be completely miserable.

‘Why man should thus feel pain; why our wretchedness should be requisite in the formation of universal felicity; why, when all other systems are made perfect by the perfection of their subordinate parts, the great system should require for its perfection, parts

‘ that are not only subordinate to others, but imperfect
‘ in themselves—these are questions that never can be
‘ explained, and might be useless if known. On this
‘ subject, Providence has thought fit to elude our curi-
‘ osity, satisfied with granting us motives to consolation.

‘ In this situation, man has called in the friendly
‘ assistance of philosophy; and Heaven, seeing the in-
‘ capacity of that to console him, has given him the
‘ aid of religion. The consolations of philosophy are
‘ very amusing, but often fallacious. It tells us that life
‘ is filled with comforts, if we will but enjoy them; and
‘ on the other hand, that though we unavoidably have
‘ miseries here, life is short, and they will soon be over.
‘ Thus do these consolations destroy each other; for if
‘ life is a place of comfort, its shortness must be misery;
‘ and if it be long, our griefs are protracted. Thus
‘ philosophy is weak; but religion comforts in an
‘ higher strain. Man is here, it tells us, fitting up his
‘ mind, and preparing it for another abode. When the
‘ good man leaves the body, and is all a glorious mind,
‘ he will find he has been making himself a heaven of
‘ happiness here, while the wretch that has been maim-
‘ ed and contaminated by his vices, shrinks from his
‘ body with terror, and finds that he has anticipated
‘ the vengeance of Heaven. To religion, then, we
‘ must hold, in every circumstance of life, for our truest
‘ comfort; for if already we are happy, it is a pleasure
‘ to think that we can make that happiness unending;
‘ and if we are miserable, it is very consoling to think
‘ that there is a place of rest. Thus, to the fortu-
‘ nate, religion holds out a continuance of bliss; to the
‘ wretched, a change from pain.

‘ But though religion is very kind to all men, it has
‘ promised peculiar rewards to the unhappy; the sick,
‘ the naked, the houseless, the heavy-laden, and the
‘ prisoner, have ever most frequent promises in our
‘ sacred law. The Author of our religion every where
‘ professes himself the wretch’s friend; and, unlike the
‘ false-ones of this world, bestows all his caresses upon
‘ the forlorn. The unthinking have censured this as
‘ partiality, as a preference, without merit to deserve
‘ it. But they never reflect that it is not in the power
‘ even of Heaven itself to make the offer of unceasing
‘ felicity as great a gift to the happy as to the miser-
‘ able. To the first, eternity is but a single blessing,
‘ since, at most, it but increases what they already pos-
‘ sess. To the latter, it is a double advantage; for it
‘ diminishes their pain here, and rewards them with
‘ heavenly bliss hereafter.

‘ But Providence is in another respect kinder to the
‘ poor than to the rich; for as it thus makes the life
‘ after death more desirable, so it smooths the passage
‘ there. The wretched have had a long familiarity with
‘ every face of terror. The man of sorrows lays himself
‘ quietly down, with no possessions to regret, and but
‘ few ties to stop his departure: he feels only nature’s
‘ pang in the final separation, and this is no way greater
‘ than he has often fainted under before; for after a
‘ certain degree of pain, every new breach that death
‘ opens in the constitution, nature kindly covers with
‘ insensibility.

‘ Thus Providence has given to the wretched two ad-
‘ vantages over the happy in this life—greater felicity
‘ in dying, and in heaven all that superiority of plea-

‘ sure which arises from contrasted enjoyment. And
‘ this superiority, my friends, is no small advantage,
‘ and seems to be one of the pleasures of the poor man
‘ in the parable; for though he was already in heaven,
‘ and felt all the raptures it could give, yet it was men-
‘ tioned, as an addition to his happiness, that he had
‘ once been wretched, and now was comforted; that
‘ he had known what it was to be miserable, and now
‘ felt what it was to be happy.

‘ Thus, my friends, you see religion does what phi-
‘ losophy could never do: it shews the equal dealings
‘ of Heaven to the happy and the unhappy, and levels
‘ all human enjoyments to nearly the same standard.
‘ It gives to both rich and poor the same happiness
‘ hereafter, and equal hopes to aspire after it; but if the
‘ rich have the advantage of enjoying pleasure here, the
‘ poor have the endless satisfaction of knowing what it
‘ was once to be miserable, when crowned with endless
‘ felicity hereafter; and even though it should be called
‘ a small advantage, yet, being an eternal one, it must
‘ make up by duration, what the temporal happiness
‘ of the great may have exceeded by intenseness.

‘ These are, therefore, the consolations which the
‘ wretched have peculiar to themselves, and in which
‘ they are above the rest of mankind; in other respects
‘ they are below them. They who would know the
‘ miseries of the poor, must see life and endure it. To
‘ declaim on the temporal advantages they enjoy, is
‘ only repeating what none either believe or practise.
‘ The men who have the necessities of living, are not
‘ poor; and they who want them, must be miserable.
‘ Yes, my friends, we must be miserable. No vain

‘ efforts of a refined imagination can sooth the wants of
‘ nature, can give elastic sweetness to the dank vapour
‘ of a dungeon, or ease the throbbings of a broken heart.
‘ Let the philosopher from his couch of softness tell us
‘ we can resist all these. Alas! the effort by which we
‘ resist them is still the greatest pain. Death is flight,
‘ and any man may sustain it; but torments are dreadful,
‘ and these no man can endure.

‘ To us, then, my friends, the promises of happiness
‘ in heaven should be peculiarly dear, for if our reward
‘ be in this life alone, we are, indeed, of all men, the
‘ most miserable. When I look round these gloomy
‘ walls, made to terrify, as well as to confine us; this
‘ light, that only serves to shew the horrors of the
‘ place; those shackles, that tyranny has imposed, or
‘ crime made necessary; when I survey these emaciated
‘ looks, and hear those groans—O, my friends, what a
‘ glorious exchange would heaven be for these! To fly
‘ through regions unconfined as air—to bask in the sunshine
‘ of eternal bliss—to carol over endless hymns of
‘ praise—to have no master to threaten or insult us, but
‘ the form of goodness himself for ever in our eyes;
‘ when I think of these things, death becomes the messenger
‘ of very glad tidings; when I think of these
‘ things, his sharpest arrow becomes the staff of my support;
‘ when I think of these things, what is there in
‘ life worth having? when I think of these things,
‘ what is there that should not be spurned away? Kings
‘ in their palaces should groan for such advantages; but
‘ we, humbled as we are, should yearn for them.

‘ And shall these things be ours? Ours they will certainly
‘ be, if we but try for them; and what is a com-

' fort, we are shut out from many temptations that
 ' would retard our pursuit. Only let us try for them;
 ' and they will certainly be ours; and what is still a
 ' comfort, shortly too: for if we look back on past life,
 ' it appears but a very short span, and whatever we
 ' may think of the rest of life, it will yet be found of
 ' less duration; as we grow older, the days seem to
 ' grow shorter, and our intimacy with time ever lessens
 ' the perception of his stay. Then let us take comfort
 ' now, for we shall soon be at our journey's end; we
 ' shall soon lay down the heavy burden laid by Heaven
 ' upon us; and though death, the only friend of the
 ' wretched, for a little while mocks the weary traveller
 ' with the view, and, like the horizon, still flies before
 ' him; yet the time will certainly and shortly come,
 ' when we shall cease from our toil; when the luxuri-
 ' ous great-ones of the world shall no more tread us to
 ' the earth; when we shall think with pleasure on our
 ' sufferings below; when we shall be surrounded with
 ' all our friends, or such as deserved our friendship;
 ' when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still, to crown
 ' all, unending.'

CHAP. XI.

HAPPIER PROSPECTS BEGIN TO APPEAR. LET US BE
 INFLEXIBLE, AND FORTUNE WILL AT LAST
 CHANGE IN OUR FAVOUR.

WHEN I had thus finished, and my audience was
 retired, the gaoler, who was one of the most hu-
 mane of his profession, hoped I would not be displeased,
 as what he did was but his duty; observing, that he

must be obliged to remove my son into a stronger cell, but he should be permitted to visit me every morning. I thanked him for his clemency, and grasping my boy's hand, bade him farewell, and be mindful of the great duty that was before him.

I again, therefore, laid me down, and one of my little ones sat by my bedside reading, when Mr. Jenkinson entering, informed me that there was news of my daughter; for that she was seen by a person about two hours before, in a strange gentleman's company, and that they had stopped at a neighbouring village for refreshment, and seemed as if returning to town. He had scarce delivered this news, when the gaoler came, with looks of haste and pleasure, to inform me that my daughter was found! Moses came running in a moment after, crying out that his sister Sophy was below, and coming up with our old friend Mr. Burchell.

Just as he delivered this news, my dearest girl entered, and, with looks almost wild with pleasure, ran to kiss me in a transport of affection. Her mother's tears and silence also shewed her pleasure. 'Here, papa,' cried the charming girl, 'here is the brave man to whom I owe my delivery; to this gentleman's interpidity I am indebted for my happiness and safety.'—A kiss from Mr. Burchell, whose pleasure seemed even greater than her's, interrupted what she was going to add.

'Ah, Mr. Burchell,' cried I, 'this is but a wretched habitation you find us in; and we are now very different from what you last saw us. You were ever our friend: we have long discovered our errors with regard to you, and repented of our ingratitude. Af-

‘ter the vile usage you then received at my hands, I
‘am almost ashamed to behold your face; yet I hope
‘you’ll forgive me, as I was deceived by a base un-
‘generous wretch, who, under the mask of friendship,
‘has undone me!’

‘It is impossible,’ replied Mr. Burchell, ‘that I
‘should forgive you, as you never deserved my resent-
‘ment. I partly saw your delusion then, and as it was
‘out of my power to restrain, I could only pity it!’

‘It was ever my conjecture,’ cried I, ‘that your
‘mind was noble; but now I find it so.—But tell me,
‘my dear child, how hast thou been relieved, or who
‘the ruffians were that carried thee away?’

‘Indeed, Sir,’ replied she, ‘as to the villain who
‘carried me off, I am yet ignorant. For as my mamma
‘and I were walking out, he came behind us, and,
‘almost before I could call for help, forced me into
‘the post-chaise, and in an instant the horses drove
‘away. I met several on the road, to whom I cried
‘out for assistance; but they disregarded my intreaties.
‘In the mean time, the ruffian himself used every art
‘to hinder me from crying out: he flattered and
‘threatened me by turns, and swore that if I conti-
‘nued but silent, he intended no harm. In the mean
‘time, I had broken the canvas that he had drawn up,
‘and whom ~~should~~ I perceive, at some distance, but
‘your old friend Mr. Burchell, walking along with his
‘usual swiftness, with the great stick for which we
‘used so much to ridicule him. As soon as we came
‘within hearing, I called out to him by name, and in-
‘treated his help. I repeated my exclamations several
‘times; upon which, with a very loud voice, he bid

‘ the postillion stop; but the boy took no notice, but
‘ drove on with still greater speed. I now thought he
‘ could never overtake us, when, in less than a mi-
‘ nute, I saw Mr. Burchell come running up by the
‘ side of the horses, and, with one blow, knocked the
‘ postillion to the ground. The horses, when he was
‘ fallen, soon stopped of themselves; and the ruffian
‘ stepping out, with oaths and menaces, drew his sword,
‘ and ordered him at his peril to retire; but Mr. Bur-
‘ chell running up, shivered his sword to pieces, and
‘ then pursued him for near a quarter of a mile: but
‘ he made his escape. I was at this time come out
‘ myself, willing to assist my deliverer; but he soon re-
‘ turned to me in triumph. The postillion, who was
‘ recovered, was going to make his escape too; but
‘ Mr. Burchell ordered him at his peril to mount again,
‘ and drive back to town. Finding it impossible to
‘ resist, he reluctantly complied, though the wound
‘ he had received seemed, to me at least, to be dan-
‘ gerous. He continued to complain of the pain as
‘ we drove along, so that he at last excited Mr. Bur-
‘ chell’s compassion; who, at my request, exchanged
‘ him for another at an inn where we called on our re-
‘ turn.’

‘ Welcome, then,’ cried I, ‘ my child, and thou her
‘ gallant deliverer, a thousand welcomes. Though our
‘ cheer is but wretched, yet our hearts are ready to
‘ receive you. And now, Mr. Burchell, as you have
‘ delivered my girl, if you think her a recompense, she
‘ is yours; if you can stoop to an alliance with a fa-
‘ mily so poor as mine, take her, obtain her consent,
‘ as I know you have her heart, and you have mine.

‘ And let me tell you, Sir, that I give you no small treasure; she has been celebrated for beauty, it is true, but that is not my meaning—I give you up a treasure in her mind.’

‘ But I suppose, Sir,’ cried Mr. Burchell, ‘ that you are apprized of my circumstances, and of my incapacity to support her as she deserves?’

‘ If your present objection,’ replied I, ‘ be meant as an evasion of my offer, I desist; but I know no man so worthy to deserve her as you; and, if I could give her thousands, and thousands sought her from me, yet my honest brave Burchell should be my dearest choice.’

To all this, his silence alone seemed to give a mortifying refusal; and without the least reply to my offer, he demanded if we could not be furnished with refreshments from the next inn; to which being answered in the affirmative, he ordered them to send in the best dinner that could be provided upon such short notice. He bespoke also a dozen of their best wine, and some cordials for me; adding, with a smile, that he would stretch a little for once; and, though in a prison, asserted he was never better disposed to be merry. The waiter soon made his appearance with preparations for dinner, a table was lent us by the gaoler, who seemed remarkably assiduous; the wine was disposed in order, and two very well dressed dishes were brought in.

My daughter had not yet heard of her poor brother’s melancholy situation, and we all seemed unwilling to damp her cheerfulness by the relation. But it was in vain that I attempted to appear cheerful, the circumstances of my unfortunate son broke through all efforts

to dissemble; so that I was at last obliged to damp our mirth by relating his misfortunes, and wishing he might be permitted to share with us in this little interval of satisfaction. After my guests were recovered from the consternation my account had produced, I requested also that Mr. Jenkinson, a fellow-prisoner, might be admitted; and the gaoler granted my request with an air of unusual submission. The clanking of my son's irons was no sooner heard along the passage, than his sister ran impatiently to meet him; while Mr. Burchell, in the mean time, asked me if my son's name was George? to which replying in the affirmative, he still continued silent. As soon as my boy entered the room, I could perceive he regarded Mr. Burchell with a look of astonishment and reverence. 'Come on,' cried I, 'my son, though we are fallen very low, yet Providence has been pleased to grant us some small relaxation from pain. Thy sister is restored to us, and there is her deliverer: to that brave man it is that I am indebted for yet having a daughter; give him, my boy, the hand of friendship, he deserves our warmest gratitude.'

My son seemed all this while regardless of what I said, and still continued fixed at a respectful distance. 'My dear brother,' cried his sister, 'why don't you thank my good deliverer? the brave should ever love each other.'

He still continued his silence and astonishment; till our guest at last perceived himself to be known, and, assuming all his native dignity, desired my son to come forward. Never before had I seen any thing so truly majestic as the air he assumed upon this occasion. The

greatest object in the universe, says a certain philosopher, is a good man struggling with adversity; yet there is still a greater, which is, the good man that comes to relieve it. After he had regarded my son for some time with a superior air, 'I again find,' said he, 'unthinking boy, that the same crime'—But here he was interrupted by one of the gaoler's servants, who came to inform us that a person of distinction, who had driven into town with a chariot and several attendants, sent his respects to the gentleman that was with us, and begged to know when he should think proper to be waited upon. 'Bid the fellow wait,' cried our guest, 'till I shall have leisure to receive him;' and then turning to my son, 'I again find, Sir,' proceeded he, 'that you are guilty of the same offence for which you once had my reproof, and for which the law is now preparing its justest punishments. You imagine, perhaps, that a contempt of your own life, gives you a right to take that of another; but where, Sir, is the difference between a duellist, who hazards a life of no value, and the murderer who acts with greater security? Is it any diminution of the gamester's fraud, when he alledges that he has staked a counter?'

'Alas, Sir,' cried I, 'whoever you are, pity the poor misguided creature; for what he has done was in obedience to a deluded mother, who, in the bitterness of her resentment, required him upon her blessing to avenge her quarrel. Here, Sir, is the letter, which will serve to convince you of her imprudence, and diminish his guilt.'

He took the letter, and hastily read it over. 'This,' says he, 'though not a perfect excuse, is such a pal-

‘liation of his fault, as induces me to forgive him.—
‘And now, Sir,’ continued he, kindly taking my son by the hand, ‘I see you are surpris’d at finding me
‘here; but I have often visited prisons upon occasions
‘less interesting. I am now come to see justice done
‘a worthy man, for whom I have the most sincere
‘esteem. I have long been a disguised spectator of thy
‘father’s benevolence. I have at his little dwelling
‘enjoyed respect uncontaminated by flattery, and
‘have received that happiness that courts could not
‘give, from the amusing simplicity around his fire-
‘side. My nephew has been apprized of my inten-
‘tions of coming here, and I find is arrived; it would
‘be wronging him and you, to condemn him without
‘examination; if there be injury, there shall be redress;
‘and this I may say without boasting, that none have
‘ever taxed the injustice of Sir William Thornhill.’

We now found that the personage whom we had long entertained as an harmless, amusing companion, was no other than the celebrated Sir William Thornhill, to whose virtues and singularities scarce any were strangers. The poor Mr. Burchell was in reality a man of large fortune and great interest, to whom senates listened with applause, and whom party heard with conviction; who was the friend of his country, but loyal to his king. My poor wife, recollecting her former familiarity, seemed to shrink with apprehension; but Sophia, who a few moments before thought him her own, now perceiving the immense distance to which he was removed by fortune, was unable to conceal her tears.

‘Ah, Sir,’ cried my wife, with a piteous aspect,
‘how is it possible that I can ever have your forgive-

‘ nefs; the flights you received from me the laft time
‘ I had the honour of feeing you at our houfe, and the
‘ jokes which I audaciously threw out—theſe, Sir, I
‘ fear can never be forgiven.’

‘ My dear good lady,’ returned he with a ſmile, ‘ if
‘ you had your joke, I had my answer; I’ll leave it to
‘ all the company if mine were not as good as your’s.
‘ To ſay the truth, I know nobody whom I am diſpoſed
‘ to be angry with at preſent, but the fellow who ſo
‘ frightened my little girl here. I had not even time to
‘ examine the rafcal’s perſon, ſo as to deſcribe him
‘ in an advertiſement. Can you tell me, Sophia, my
‘ dear, whether you ſhould know him again?’

‘ Indeed, Sir,’ replied ſhe, ‘ I can’t be poſitive; yet
‘ now I recollect, he had a large mark over one of his
‘ eye-brows.’—‘ I aſk pardon, Madam,’ interrupted
Jenkinſon, who was by, ‘ but be ſo good as to inform
‘ me if the fellow wore his own red hair?’—‘ Yes, I
‘ think ſo,’ cried Sophia.—‘ And did your honour,’
continued he, turning to Sir William, ‘ obſerve the
‘ length of his legs?’—‘ I can’t be ſure of their length,’
cried the baronet, ‘ but I am convinced of their ſwift-
‘ neſs; for he out-ran me, which is what I thought few
‘ men in the kingdom could have done.’—‘ Pleaſe
‘ your honour,’ cried Jenkinſon, ‘ I know the man; it
‘ is certainly the ſame; the beſt runner in England;
‘ he has beaten Pinwire of Newcaſtle: Timothy Baxter
‘ is his name, I know him perfectly, and the very place
‘ of his retreat this moment. If your honour will bid
‘ Mr. Gaoler let two of his men go with me, I’ll en-
‘ gage to produce him to you in an hour at fartheſt.’
Upon this the gaoler was called, who inſtantly appear-

ing, Sir William demanded if he knew him. 'Yes, please your honour,' replied the gaoler, 'I know Sir William Thornhill well; and every body that knows any thing of him, will desire to know more of him.' 'Well, then,' said the baronet, 'my request is, that you will permit this man and two of your servants to go upon a message by my authority, and, as I am in the commission of the peace, I undertake to secure you.'—'Your promise is sufficient,' replied the other, 'and you may at a minute's warning send them over England whenever your honour thinks fit.'

In pursuance of the gaoler's compliance, Jenkinson was dispatched in search of Timothy Baxter, while we were amused with the assiduity of our youngest boy Bill, who had just come in and climbed up to Sir William's neck in order to kiss him. His mother was immediately going to chastise his familiarity, but the worthy man prevented her, and taking the child, all ragged as he was, upon his knee, 'What, Bill, you chubby rogue,' cried he, 'do you remember your old friend Burchell? and Dick, too, my honest veteran, are you here; you shall find I have not forgot you.' So saying, he gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows eat very heartily, as they had got that morning but a very scanty breakfast.

We now sat down to dinner, which was almost cold: but previously, my arm still continuing painful, Sir William wrote a prescription, for he had made the study of physic his amusement, and was more than moderately skilled in the profession: this being sent to an apothecary who lived in the place, my arm was dressed, and I found almost instantaneous relief. We

were waited upon at dinner by the gaoler himself, who was willing to do our guest all the honour in his power. But before we had well dined, another message was brought from his nephew, desiring permission to appear, in order to vindicate his innocence and honour; with which request the baronet complied, and desired Mr. Thornhill to be introduced.

CHAP. XII.

FORMER BENEVOLENCE NOW REPAID WITH
UNEXPECTED INTEREST.

MR. Thornhill made his entrance with a smile, which he seldom wanted, and was going to embrace his uncle, which the other repulsed with an air of disdain. ‘No fawning, Sir, at present,’ cried the baronet, with a look of severity, ‘the only way to my heart is by the road of honour; but here I only see complicated instances of falsehood, cowardice, and oppression.—How is it, Sir, that this poor man, for whom I know you professed a friendship, is used thus hardly? His daughter vilely seduced, as a recompense for his hospitality, and he himself thrown into prison, perhaps but for resenting the insult? His son, too, whom you feared to face as a man—’

‘Is it possible, Sir,’ interrupted his nephew, ‘that my uncle should object that as a crime, which his repeated instructions alone have persuaded me to avoid?’

‘Your rebuke,’ cried Sir William, ‘is just; you have acted in this instance prudently and well, though not quite as your father would have done: my bro-

‘ther indeed was the soul of honour; but thou——
‘yes, you have acted in this instance perfectly right,
‘and it has my warmest approbation.’

‘And I hope,’ said his nephew, ‘that the rest of
‘my conduct will not be found to deserve censure.
‘I appeared, Sir, with this gentleman’s daughter at
‘some places of public amusement; thus, what was
‘levity, scandal called by a harsher name, and it was
‘reported that I had debauched her. I waited on her
‘father in person, willing to clear the thing to his satis-
‘faction, and he received me only with insult and
‘abuse. As for the rest, with regard to his being here,
‘my attorney and steward can best inform you, as I
‘commit the management of business entirely to them.
‘If he has contracted debts, and is unwilling, or even
‘unable, to pay them, it is their business to proceed in
‘this manner; and I see no hardship or injustice in
‘pursuing the most legal means of redress.’

‘If this,’ cried Sir William, ‘be as you have stated
‘it, there is nothing unpardonable in your offences;
‘and though your conduct might have been more
‘generous, in not suffering this gentleman to be op-
‘pressed by subordinate tyranny, yet it has been at
‘least equitable.’

‘He cannot contradict a single particular,’ replied
the squire; ‘I defy him to do so, and several of my ser-
‘vants are ready to attest what I say. Thus, Sir,’ con-
tinued he, finding that I was silent, for in fact I could
not contradict him; ‘thus, Sir, my own innocence is
‘vindicated: but though at your entreaty I am ready
‘to forgive this gentleman every other offence, yet his
‘attempts to lessen me in your esteem, excite a resent-

‘ment that I cannot govern; and this, too, at a time
‘when his son was actually preparing to take away
‘my life; this, I say, was such guilt, that I am deter-
‘mined to let the law take its course. I have here the
‘challenge that was sent me, and two witnesses to
‘prove it; one of my servants has been wounded dan-
‘gerously; and even though my uncle himself should
‘dissuade me, which I know he will not, yet I will
‘see public justice done, and he shall suffer for it.’

‘Thou monster,’ cried my wife, ‘hast thou not had
‘vengeance enough already, but must my poor boy
‘feel thy cruelty; I hope that good Sir William will
‘protect us, for my son is as innocent as a child; I am
‘sure he is, and never did harm to man.’

‘Madam,’ replied the good man, ‘your wishes for
‘his safety are not greater than mine; but I am sorry
‘to find his guilt too plain; and if my nephew per-
‘sists—’ But the appearance of Jenkinson and the
gaoler’s two servants, now called off our attention,
who entered hauling in a tall man, very genteelly dressed,
and answering the description already given of that
ruffian who had carried off my daughter.—‘Here,’
cried Jenkinson, pulling him in, ‘here, we have him,
‘and if ever there was a candidate for Tyburn this is
‘one.’

The moment Mr. Thornhill perceived the prisoner,
and Jenkinson, who had him in custody, he seemed to
shrink backward with terror. His face became pale
with conscious guilt, and he would have withdrawn;
but Jenkinson, who perceived his design, stopped him.
‘What, squire,’ cried he, ‘are you ashamed of your
‘two old acquaintances, Jenkinson and Baxter? But

‘ this is the way that all great men forget their friends, though I am resolved we will not forget you. Our prisoner, please your honour,’ continued he, turning to Sir William, ‘ has already confessed all. This is the gentleman reported to be dangerously wounded: he declares that it was Mr. Thornhill who first put him upon this affair; that he gave him the clothes he now wears, to appear like a gentleman, and furnished him with a post-chaise. The plan was laid between them, that he should carry off the young lady to a place of safety, and that there he should threaten and terrify her; but Mr. Thornhill was to come in, in the mean time, as if by accident, to her rescue, and that they should fight awhile, and then he was to have run off, by which Mr. Thornhill would have the better opportunity of gaining her affections himself, under the character of her defender.’

Sir William remembered the coat to have been frequently worn by his nephew, and all the rest the prisoner himself confirmed by a more circumstantial account; concluding, that Mr. Thornhill had often declared to him, that he was in love with both sisters at the same time.

‘ Heavens,’ cried Sir William, ‘ what a viper have I been fostering in my bosom! And so fond of public justice too as he seemed to be! But he shall have it; secure him, Mr. Gaoler—yet hold, I fear there is not legal evidence to detain him.’

Upon this, Mr. Thornhill, with the utmost humility, entreated that two such abandoned wretches might not be admitted as evidences against him, but that his servants should be examined. ‘ Your servants!’

replied Sir William; 'wretch! call them yours no longer: but come; let us hear what those fellows have to say; let his butler be called.'

When the butler was introduced, he soon perceived by his former master's looks that all his power was now over. 'Tell me,' cried Sir William sternly, 'have you ever seen your master, and that fellow dressed up in his clothes, in company together?'—'Yes, please your honour,' cried the butler, 'a thousand times: he was the man that always brought him his ladies.'—'How,' interrupted young Mr. Thornhill, 'this to my face!'—'Yes,' replied the butler, 'or to any man's face. To tell you a truth, Master Thornhill, I never either loved you or liked you, and I don't care if I tell you now a piece of my mind.'—'Now then,' cried Jenkinson, 'tell his honour whether you know any thing of me.'—'I can't say,' replied the butler, 'that I know much good of you. The night that gentleman's daughter was deluded to our house, you was one of them.'—'So then,' cried Sir William, 'I find you have brought a very fine witness to prove your innocence: thou stain to humanity! to associate with such wretches!—But (continuing his examination) you tell me, Mr. Butler, that this was the person who brought him this old gentleman's daughter.'—'No, please your honour,' replied the butler, 'he did not bring her, for the squire himself undertook that business; but he brought the priest that pretended to marry them.'—'It is but too true,' cried Jenkinson, 'I cannot deny it; that was the employment assigned to me, and I confess it to my confusion.'

‘ Good heavens!’ exclaimed the baronet, ‘ how every new discovery of his villainy alarms me! All his guilt is now too plain, and I find his present prosecution was dictated by tyranny, cowardice, and revenge; at my request, Mr. Gaoler, set this young officer, now your prisoner, free, and trust to me for the consequences. I’ll make it my business to set the affair in a proper light to my friend, the magistrate, who has committed him. But where is the unfortunate young lady herself? let her appear to confront this wretch; I long to know by what arts he has seduced her. Intreat her to come in. Where is she?’

‘ Ah! Sir,’ said I, ‘ that question flings me to the heart; I was once indeed happy in a daughter, but her miseries’—Another interruption here prevented me; for who should make her appearance but Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was the next day to have been married to Mr. Thornhill. Nothing could equal her surprise at seeing Sir William and his nephew here before her; for her arrival was quite accidental. It happened that she and the old gentleman, her father, were passing through the town, on the way to her aunt’s, who had insisted that her nuptials with Mr. Thornhill should be consummated at her house; but stopping for refreshment, they put up at an inn at the other end of the town. It was there from the window that the young lady happened to observe one of my little boys playing in the street, and instantly sending a footman to bring the child to her, she learnt from him some account of our misfortunes; but was still kept ignorant of young Mr. Thornhill’s being the cause. Though her father made several remonstrances on the

impropriety of her going to a prison to visit us, yet they were ineffectual: she desired the child to conduct her, which he did, and it was thus she surprised us at a juncture so unexpected.

Nor can I go on, without a reflection on those accidental meetings, which, though they happen every day, seldom excite our surprise but upon some extraordinary occasion. To what a fortuitous concurrence do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives! How many seeming accidents must unite before we can be clothed or fed! The peasant must be disposed to labour, the shower must fall, the wind fill the merchant's sail, or numbers must want the usual supply.

We all continued silent for some moments, while my charming pupil, which was the name I generally gave this young lady, united in her looks compassion and astonishment, which gave new finishing to her beauty. 'Indeed, my dear Mr. Thornhill,' cried she, to the squire, who she supposed was come here to succour, and not to oppress us, 'I take it a little unkindly that you should come here without me, or never inform me of the situation of a family so dear to us both: you know I should take as much pleasure in contributing to the relief of my reverend old master here, whom I shall ever esteem, as you can. But I find that, like your uncle, you take a pleasure in doing good in secret.'

'He find pleasure in doing good!' cried Sir William, interrupting her; 'no, my dear, his pleasures are as base as he is. You see in him, Madam, as compleat a villain as ever disgraced humanity. A wretch, who, after having deluded this poor man's

‘daughter, after plotting against the innocence of her sister, has thrown the father into prison, and the eldest son into fetters, because he had the courage to face his betrayer! And, give me leave, Madam, now to congratulate you upon an escape from the embraces of such a monster!’

‘O goodness,’ cried the lovely girl, ‘how have I been deceived! Mr. Thornhill informed me for certain, that this gentleman’s eldest son, Captain Primrose, was gone off to America with his new married lady.’

‘My sweetest Miss,’ cried my wife, ‘he has told you nothing but falsehoods. My son George never left the kingdom, nor never was married. Though you have forsaken him, he has always loved you too well to think of any body else; and I have heard him say he would die a bachelor for your sake.’ She then proceeded to expatiate upon the sincerity of her son’s passion; she set his duel with Mr. Thornhill in a proper light, from thence she made a rapid digression to the squire’s debaucheries, his pretended marriages, and ended with a most insulting picture of his cowardice.

‘Good Heavens!’ cried Miss Wilmot, ‘how very near have I been to the brink of ruin; but how great is my pleasure to have escaped it! Ten thousand falsehoods has this gentleman told me! He had at last art enough to persuade me that my promise to the only man I esteemed, was no longer binding, since he had been unfaithful. By his falsehoods I was taught to detest one equally brave and generous!’

But by this time my son was freed from the incumbrances of justice, as the person supposed to be

wounded was detected to be an impostor. Mr. Jenkinson also, who had acted as his valet de chambre, had dressed up his hair, and furnished him with whatever was necessary to make a genteel appearance. He now, therefore, entered, handsomely dressed in his regimentals, and, without vanity (for I am above it) he appeared as handsome a fellow as ever wore a military dress. As he entered, he made Miss Wilmot a modest and distant bow, for he was not as yet acquainted with the change which the eloquence of his mother had wrought in his favour. But no decorums could restrain the impatience of his blushing mistress to be forgiven. Her tears, her looks, all contributed to discover the real sensations of her heart, for having forgotten her former promise, and having suffered herself to be deluded by an impostor. My son appeared amazed at her condescension, and could scarce believe it real.—‘Sure, Madam,’ cried he, ‘this is but delusion! I can never have merited this! To be blest thus, is to be too happy!’—‘No, Sir,’ replied she, ‘I have been deceived, basely deceived, else nothing could have ever made me unjust to my promise. You know my friendship, you have long known it; but forget what I have done, and as you once had my warmest vows of constancy, you shall now have them repeated; and be assured, that if your Arabella cannot be your’s, she shall never be another’s.’—‘And no other’s you shall be,’ cried Sir William, ‘if I have any influence with your father.’

This hint was sufficient for my son Moses, who immediately flew to the inn where the old gentleman was, to inform him of every circumstance that had

happened. But in the mean time the squire, perceiving that he was on every side undone, now finding that no hopes were left from flattery or dissimulation, concluded that his wisest way would be to turn and face his pursuers. Thus, laying aside all shame, he appeared the open and hardy villain. 'I find then,' cried he, 'that I am to expect no justice here; but I am resolved it shall be done me. You shall know, Sir,' turning to Sir William, 'I am no longer a poor dependant upon your favours. I scorn them. Nothing can keep Miss Wilmot's fortune from me, which, I thank her father's assiduity, is pretty large. The articles, and a bond for her fortune, are signed, and safe in my possession. It was her fortune, not her person, that induced me to wish for this match; and possessed of the one, let who will take the other.'

This was an alarming blow; Sir William was sensible of the justness of his claims, for he had been instrumental in drawing up the marriage-articles himself. Miss Wilmot, therefore, perceiving that her fortune was irretrievably lost, turning to my son, she asked if the loss of fortune could lessen her value to him? 'Though fortune,' said she, 'is out of my power, at least I have my hand to give.'

'And that, Madam,' cried her real lover, 'was, indeed, all that you ever had to give; at least, all that I ever thought worth the acceptance. And, I now protest, my Arabella, by all that's happy, your want of fortune this moment increases my pleasure, as it serves to convince my sweet girl of my sincerity.'

Mr. Wilmot now entering, he seemed not a little pleased at the danger his daughter had just escaped,

and readily consented to a dissolution of the match. But, finding that her fortune, which was secured to Mr. Thornhill by bond, would not be given up, nothing could exceed his disappointment. He now saw that his money must all go to enrich one who had no fortune of his own. He could bear his being a rascal, but to want an equivalent to his daughter's fortune was wormwood. He sat, therefore, for some minutes, employed in the most mortifying speculation, till Sir William attempted to lessen his anxiety. 'I must confess, Sir,' cried he, 'that your present disappointment does not entirely displease me. Your immoderate passion for wealth is now justly punished. But though the young lady cannot be rich, she has still a sufficient competence to give content. Here you see an honest young soldier, who is willing to take her without fortune; they have long loved each other, and, for the friendship I bear his father, my interest shall not be wanting in his promotion. Leave, then, that ambition which disappoints you, and for once admit that happiness which courts your acceptance.'

'Sir William,' replied the old gentleman, 'be assured I never yet forced her inclinations, nor will I now. If she still continues to love this young gentleman, let her have him with all my heart. There is still, thank Heaven, some fortune left, and your promise will make it something more. Only let my old friend here,' (meaning me,) 'give me a promise of settling six thousand pounds upon my girl, if ever he should come to his fortune, and I am ready this night to be the first to join them together.'

As it now remained with me to make the young

couple happy, I readily gave a promise of making the settlement he required; which, to one who had such little expectations as I, was no great favour. We had now, therefore, the satisfaction of seeing them fly into each other's arms in a transport. 'After all my misfortunes,' cried my son George, 'to be thus rewarded! Sure this is more than I could ever have presumed to hope for. To be possessed of all that's good, and after such an interval of pain! my warmest wishes could never rise so high!'—'Yes, my George,' returned his lovely bride, 'now let the wretch take my fortune; since you are happy without it, so am I. O what an exchange have I made, from the basest of men to the dearest, best! Let him enjoy our fortune, I now can be happy even in indigence.'—'And I promise you,' cried the squire, with a malicious grin, 'that I shall be very happy with what you despise.'—'Hold, hold, Sir,' cried Jenkinson, 'there are two words to that bargain. As for that lady's fortune, Sir, you shall never touch a single shiver of it.—Pray, your honour,' continued he to Sir William, 'can the squire have this lady's fortune if he be married to another?'—'How can you make such a simple demand?' replied the baronet; 'undoubtedly he cannot.'—'I am sorry for that,' cried Jenkinson; 'for as this gentleman and I have been old fellow-sporters, I have a friendship for him. But I must declare, well as I love him, that his contract is not worth a tobacco-stopper, for he is married already.' 'You lie like a rascal,' returned the squire, who seemed roused by this insult; 'I never was legally married to any woman.'—'Indeed, begging your ho-

‘nour’s pardon,’ replied the other, ‘you were: and I hope you will shew a proper return of friendship to your own honest Jenkinson, who brings you a wife; and if the company restrain their curiosity a few minutes, they shall see her.’ So saying, he went off with his usual celerity, and left us all unable to form any probable conjecture as to his design. ‘Aye, let him go,’ cried the squire; ‘whatever else I may have done, I defy him there. I am too old now to be frightened with squibs.’

‘I am surpris’d,’ said the baronet, ‘what the fellow can intend by this. Some low piece of humour, I suppose!’—‘Perhaps, Sir,’ replied I, ‘he may have a more serious meaning. For when we reflect on the various schemes this gentleman has laid to seduce innocence, perhaps some one, more artful than the rest, has been found able to deceive him. When we consider what numbers he has ruined, how many parents now feel with anguish, the infamy and the contamination which he has brought into their families, it would not surprise me if some of them—Amazement! Do I see my lost daughter! Do I hold her! It is, it is my life, my happiness! I thought thee lost, my Olivia, yet still I hold thee, and still thou shalt live to bless me!’ The warmest transports of the fondest lover were not greater than mine, when I saw him introduce my child, and held my daughter in my arms, whose silence only spoke her raptures. ‘And art thou returned to me, my darling,’ cried I, ‘to be my comfort in age!’—‘That she is,’ cried Jenkinson, ‘and make much of her, for she is your own honourable child, and as honest a woman as any in the

‘ whole room, let the other be who she will.—And as
‘ for you, squire, as sure as you stand there, this young
‘ lady is your lawful wedded wife : and to convince
‘ you that I speak nothing but the truth, here is the
‘ licence by which you were married together.’ So
saying, he put the licence into the baronet’s hands,
who read it, and found it perfect in every respect.
‘ And now, gentlemen,’ continued he, ‘ I find you are
‘ surpris’d at all this; but a very few words will ex-
‘ plain the difficulty. That there squire of renown,
‘ for whom I have a great friendship, but that’s be-
‘ tween ourselves, has often employed me in doing
‘ odd little things for him. Among the rest, he com-
‘ missioned me to procure him a false licence and a
‘ false priest, in order to deceive this young lady. But
‘ as I was very much his friend, what did I do but
‘ went and got a true licence and a true priest, and
‘ married them both as fast as the cloth could make
‘ them. Perhaps you’ll think it was generosity made
‘ me do all this. But, no. To my shame I confess it :
‘ my only design was to keep the licence, and let the
‘ squire know that I could prove it upon him when-
‘ ever I thought proper, and so make him come down
‘ whenever I wanted money.’ A burst of pleasure now
seemed to fill the whole apartment ; our joy even
reached the common room, where the prisoners them-
selves sympathized,

..... And shook their chains

In transport and rude harmony.

Happiness was expanded upon every face, and even
Olivia’s cheeks seemed flushed with pleasure. To be
thus restored to reputation, to friends and fortune at

once, was a rapture sufficient to stop the progress of decay, and restore former health and vivacity. But, perhaps, among all, there was not one who felt sincerer pleasure than I. Still holding the dear loved child in my arms, I asked my heart if these transports were not delusive. 'How could you,' cried I, turning to Jenkinson, 'how could you add to my miseries by the story of her death? But it matters not; my pleasure at finding her again is more than a recompense for the pain.'

'As to your question,' replied Jenkinson, 'that is easily answered. I thought the only probable means of freeing you from prison, was by submitting to the squire, and consenting to his marriage with the other young lady. But these you had vowed never to grant while your daughter was living; there was, therefore, no other method to bring things to bear, but by persuading you that she was dead. I prevailed on your wife to join in the deceit, and we have not had a fit opportunity of undeceiving you till now.'

In the whole assembly there now appeared only two faces that did not glow with transport. Mr. Thornhill's assurance had entirely forsaken him; he now saw the gulph of infamy and want before him, and trembled to take the plunge. He therefore fell on his knees before his uncle, and in a voice of piercing misery implored compassion. Sir William was going to spurn him away, but at my request he raised him, and after pausing a few moments, 'Thy vices, crimes, and ingratitude,' cried he, 'deserve no tenderness; yet thou shalt not be entirely forsaken; a bare competence shall be supplied to support the wants of life,

‘ but not its follies. This young lady, thy wife, shall
‘ be put in possession of a third part of that fortune,
‘ which once was thine; and from her tenderness alone
‘ thou art to expect any extraordinary supplies for the
‘ future.’ He was going to express his gratitude for
such kindness in a set speech; but the baronet pre-
vented him, by bidding him not aggravate his mean-
ness, which was already but too apparent. He or-
dered him at the same time to be gone, and from all
his former domestics to chuse one, such as he should
think proper, which was all that should be granted to
attend him.

As soon as he left us, Sir William very politely slept
up to his new niece with a smile, and wished her joy.
His example was followed by Miss Wilmot and her
father; my wife, too, kissed her daughter with much
affection, as, to use her own expression, she was now
made an honest woman of. Sophia and Moses fol-
lowed in turn, and even our benefactor Jenkinson de-
sired to be admitted to that honour. Our satisfaction
seemed scarce capable of increase. Sir William, whose
greatest pleasure was in doing good, now looked round,
with a countenance open as the sun, and saw nothing
but joy in the looks of all, except that of my daughter
Sophia, who, for some reasons we could not compre-
hend, did not seem perfectly satisfied. ‘ I think now,’
cried he, with a smile, ‘ that all the company, except
‘ one or two, seem perfectly happy. There only re-
‘ mains an act of justice for me to do. You are sensi-
‘ ble, Sir,’ continued he, turning to me, ‘ of the obli-
‘ gations we both owe to Mr. Jenkinson; and it is
‘ but just we should both reward him for it. Miss

‘ Sophia will, I am sure, make him very happy, and
‘ he shall have from me five hundred pounds as her
‘ fortune; and upon this I am sure they can live very
‘ comfortably together. Come, Miss Sophia, what say
‘ you to this match of my making? Will you have
‘ him?’ My poor girl seemed almost sinking into her
mother’s arms at the hideous proposal. ‘ Have him,
‘ Sir!’ cried she, faintly; ‘ No, Sir, never.’—‘ What,’
cried he again, ‘ not Mr. Jenkinson, your benefactor;
‘ a handsome young fellow, with five hundred pounds
‘ and good expectations?’—‘ I beg, Sir,’ returned she,
scarce able to speak, ‘ that you’ll desist, and not make
‘ me so very wretched.’—‘ Was ever such obstinacy
‘ known,’ cried he again, ‘ to refuse the man whom
‘ the family has such infinite obligations to, who has
‘ preserved your sister, and who has five hundred
‘ pounds! What, not have him!’—‘ No, Sir, never,’
replied she, angrily; ‘ I’d sooner die first!’—‘ If that be
‘ the case then,’ cried he, ‘ if you will not have him—
‘ I think I must have you myself.’ And so saying, he
caught her to his breast with ardour. ‘ My loveliest, my
‘ most sensible of girls,’ cried he, ‘ how could you ever
‘ think your own Burchell could deceive you, or that
‘ Sir William Thornhill could ever cease to admire
‘ a mistress that loved him for himself alone? I have
‘ for some years sought for a woman, who, a stranger
‘ to my fortune, could think I had merit as a man.
‘ After having tried in vain, even among the pert and
‘ the ugly, how great at last must be my rapture, to
‘ have made a conquest over such sense and such hea-
‘ venly beauty!’ Then turning to Jenkinson, ‘ As I
‘ cannot, Sir, part with this young lady myself, for

‘ she hath taken a fancy to the cut of my face, all the recompense I can make is, to give you her fortune, and you may call upon my steward to-morrow for five hundred pounds.’ Thus we had all our compliments to repeat, and Lady Thornhill underwent the same round of ceremony that her sister had done before. In the mean time, Sir William’s gentleman appeared, to tell us that the equipages were ready to carry us to the inn, where every thing was prepared for our reception. My wife and I led the van, and left those gloomy mansions of sorrow. The generous baronet ordered forty pounds to be distributed among the prisoners, and Mr. Wilmot, induced by his example, gave half that sum. We were received below by the shouts of the villagers, and I saw and shook by the hand two or three of my honest parishioners, who were among the number. They attended us to our inn, where a sumptuous entertainment was provided, and coarser provision distributed in great quantities among the populace.

After supper, as my spirits were exhausted by the alteration of pleasure and pain which they had sustained during the day, I asked permission to withdraw; and leaving the company in the midst of their mirth, as soon as I found myself alone, I poured out my heart in gratitude to the Giver of joy as well as sorrow, and then slept undisturbed till morning.

CHAP. XIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

THE next morning as soon as I awaked, I found my eldest son sitting at my bedside, who came to increase my joy with another turn of fortune in my favour. First having released me from the settlement that I had made the day before in his favour, he let me know that my merchant, who had failed in town, was arrested at Antwerp, and there had given up effects to a much greater amount than what was due to his creditors. My boy's generosity pleased me almost as much as this unlooked-for good fortune. But I had some doubts whether I ought in justice to accept his offer. While I was pondering upon this, Sir William entered the room, to whom I communicated my doubts. His opinion was, that as my son was already possessed of a very affluent fortune by his marriage, I might accept his offer without any hesitation. His business, however, was to inform me, that as he had the night before sent for the licences, and expected them every hour, he hoped that I would not refuse my assistance in making all the company happy that morning. A footman entered while we were speaking, to tell us that the messenger was returned; and as I was by this time ready, I went down, where I found the whole company as merry as affluence and innocence could make them. However, as they were now preparing for a very solemn ceremony, their laughter entirely displeased me. I told them of the grave, becoming, and sublime deportment, they should assume upon

this myſtical occaſion, and read them two homilies and a theſis of my own compoſing, in order to prepare them. Yet they ſtill ſeemed perfectly refractory and ungovernable. Even as we were going along to church, to which I led the way, all gravity had quite forſaken them, and I was often tempted to turn back in indignation. In church a new dilemma aroſe, which promiſed no eaſy ſolution. This was, which couple ſhould be married firſt; my ſon's bride warmly inſiſted, that Lady Thornhill (that was to be) ſhould take the lead: but this the other reſuſed with equal ardour, proteſting ſhe would not be guilty of ſuch rudeneſs for the world. The argument was ſupported for ſome time between both with equal obſtinacy, and good breeding. But as I ſtood all this time with my book ready, I was at laſt quite tired of the conteſt, and ſhutting it, 'I perceive,' cried I, 'that none of you have a mind to be married, and I think we had as good go back again; for I ſuppoſe there will be no buſineſs done here to-day.' This at once reduced them to reaſon. The baronet and his lady were firſt married, and then my ſon and his lovely partner.

I had previously that morning given orders that a coach ſhould be ſent for my honeſt neighbour Flamborough and his family, by which means, upon our return to the inn, we had the pleaſure of finding the two Miſs Flamborough's alighted before us. Mr. Jenkinſon gave his hand to the eldeſt, and my ſon Moſes led up the other; (and I have ſince found that he has taken a real liking to the girl, and my conſent and bounty he ſhall have whenever he thinks proper to demand them.) We were no ſooner returned to the inn,

but numbers of my parishioners, hearing of my success, came to congratulate me; but among the rest were those who rose to rescue me, and whom I formerly rebuked with such sharpness. I told the story to Sir William, my son-in-law, who went out and reproved them with great severity; but finding them quite disheartened by this harsh reproof, he gave them half-a-guinea a piece, to drink his health and raise their dejected spirits.

Soon after this we were called to a very genteel entertainment, which was dressed by Mr. Thornhill's cook. And it may not be improper to observe, with respect to that gentleman, that he now resides in quality of companion at a relation's house, being very well liked, and seldom sitting at the side-table, except when there is no room at the other; for they make no stranger of him. His time is pretty much taken up in keeping his relation, who is a little melancholy, in spirits, and in learning to blow the French horn. My eldest daughter, however, still remembers him with regret; and she has even told me, though I make a great secret of it, that when he reforms she may be brought to relent. But to return, for I am not apt to digress thus; when we were to sit down to dinner, our ceremonies were going to be renewed. The question was, whether my eldest daughter, as being a matron, should not sit above the two young brides: but the debate was cut short by my son George, who proposed that the company should sit indiscriminately, every gentleman by his lady. This was received with great approbation by all, excepting my wife, who I could perceive was not perfectly satisfied, as she expected to have had the pleasure of sitting

at the head of the table, and carving all the meat for all the company. But notwithstanding this, it is impossible to describe our good-humour. I can't say whether we had more wit amongst us now than usual; but I am certain we had more laughing, which answered the end as well. One jest I particularly remember: old Mr. Wilmot drinking to Moses, whose head was turned another way, my son replied, 'Madam, I thank you.' Upon which the old gentleman, winking upon the rest of the company, observed that he was thinking of his mistress. At which jest I thought the two Miss Flamborough's would have died with laughing. As soon as dinner was over, according to my old custom, I requested that the table might be taken away, to have the pleasure of seeing all my family assembled once more by a cheerful fire-side. My two little ones sat upon each knee, the rest of the company by their partners. I had nothing now on this side of the grave to wish for—all my cares were over, my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained, that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity.

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THE END.

